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MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

FROM

HUDSON'S SCHOOL SHAKESPEARE.

MERCHANT OF VENICE.	KING LEAR.
JULIUS CÆSAR.	AS YOU LIKE IT.
HAMLET.	HENRY IV.
THE TEMPEST.	ROMEO AND JULIET.
MACBETH.	MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.
HENRY VIII.	OTHELLO.

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INTRODUCTION TO MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

THIS play was entered at the Stationers' in August, 1600, and was published in quarto the same year, with the words, "As it hath been sundry times publicly acted," in the title-page; which would naturally infer the piece to have been written in 1599. All the internal marks of style bear in favour of the same date; the play being in this respect hardly distinguishable from *As You Like It*. After the one quarto of 1600, the play is not met with again till it reappeared in the folio of 1623. As the text of the folio differs but in two or three slight particulars from that of the quarto, the probability is that the later was reprinted from the earlier copy. And perhaps none of the Poet's plays has reached us in a more satisfactory state; the printing being such as to leave little room for doubt as to the true text.

As with many of the author's plays, the plot and story of *Much Ado About Nothing* were partly borrowed. But the same matter had been so often borrowed before, and run into so many variations, that we cannot affirm with certainty from what source the Poet directly drew. So much of the story as relates to Hero, Claudio, and Don John, bears a strong resemblance to the tale of Ariodante and Ginevra in the fifth and sixth books of Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*. Still there is little if any likelihood that the Poet took his borrowed matter from that source. A connection between the play and one of Bandello's novels is much more distinctly traceable from the similarity of names and incidents. In the novel, Fenicia, the daughter of Lionato, a gentleman of Messina, is betrothed to Timbreo de Cardona, a friend of Piero d'Aragona. Girondo, a disappointed lover of the lady, goes to work to prevent the marriage. He insinuates to Timbreo that she is disloyal, and then to make good the charge arranges to have his own hired servant in the dress of a gentleman ascend by a ladder of ropes and enter the house of Lionato at night, Timbreo being placed so as to witness the proceeding. The next morning Timbreo accuses the lady to her father, and rejects the alliance. Fenicia sinks down in a swoon; a dangerous illness follows; and, to prevent the shame of her alleged trespass, Lionato has it given out that she is dead, and a public funeral is held in confirmation of that report. Thereupon Girondo becomes so harrowed with remorse, that he confesses his villany to Timbreo, and they both throw themselves on the mercy of the lady's family. Timbreo is easily forgiven, and the reconciliation is soon followed by the discovery that the lady is still alive, and by the marriage of the parties.

This brief statement marks the nature and extent of Shakespeare's obligation to Bandello. The parts of Benedick and Beatrice, of Dogberry and Verges, and of several other persons, are altogether original with him; at least no traces of them have been found in any other book or writing: so that he stands responsible for all the wit and humour, and for nearly all the character, of the play. As no translation of Bandello has been discovered of so early a date as the play, it does not well appear how the Poet could have become acquainted with the novel except in the original. But the Italian was then the most generally studied language in Europe; educated Englishmen were probably quite as apt to be familiar with it as they are with the French in our day; Shakespeare, at the time of writing this play, was thirty-five years old; and we have many indications of his having known enough of Italian to be able to read such a story as Bandello's in that language.

The play has a large variety of interest, now running into grotesque drollery, now bordering upon the sphere of tragic elevation, now revelling in the most sparkling brilliancy. The piece is indeed aptly named: we have several nothings, each in its turn occasioning a deal of stir and perturbation: yet there is so much of real flavour and spirit stirred out into effect, that the littleness of the occasions is scarcely felt or observed; the thoughts being far more drawn to the persons who make the much ado than to the nothing about which the much ado is made. The excellencies, however, both of plot and character, are rather of the striking sort, involving little of that hidden or retiring beauty which shows just enough on the surface to invite a diligent search, and then enriches the seeker with generous returns. Accordingly the play has always been very effective on the stage; the points and situations being so shaped and ordered that, with fair acting, they tell at once on an average audience; while at the same time there is enough of solid substance beneath to justify and support the first impression; so that the stage-effect is withal legitimate and sound as well as quick and taking.

On the general character of the play, I have met with no remarks better suited to the purpose of this Introduction than Schlegel's. "The mode," says he, "in which the innocent Hero, before the altar at the moment of the marriage, and in the presence of her family and many witnesses, is put to shame by a most degrading charge, false indeed, yet clothed with every appearance of truth, is a grand piece of theatrical effect in the true and justifiable sense. The impression would have been too tragical, had not Shakespeare carefully softened it in order to prepare for a fortunate catastrophe. The discovery of the plot against Hero has been already partly made, though not by the persons interested; and the Poet has contrived, by means of the blundering simplicity of a couple of constables and watchmen, to convert the arrest and examination of the guilty individuals into scenes full of the most delightful amusement. There is also a second piece of theatrical effect not inferior to the first, where Claudio, now convinced of his error, and in obedience to the penance laid on his fault, thinking to give his hand to a relative of his injured bride, whom he supposes dead, discovers, on her unmasking, Hero herself. The extraordinary success of this play in Shakespeare's own day, and ever since in England, is, however, to be ascribed more particularly to the parts of Benedick and Beatrice, two humoursome beings, who incessantly attack each other with all the resources of raillery. Avowed rebels to love, they are both entangled in its nets by a merry plot of their friends to make them believe that each is the object of the secret passion of the other. Some one or other, not overstocked with penetration, has objected to the same artifice being twice used in entrapping them: the drollery, however, lies in the very symmetry of the deception. Their friends attribute the whole effect to their own device; but the exclusive direction of their raillery against each other is in itself proof of a growing inclination. Their witty vivacity does not abandon them even in their avowal of love; and their behaviour only assumes a serious appearance for the purpose of defending the slandered Hero. This is exceedingly well imagined: the lovers of jesting must fix a point beyond which they are not to indulge their humour, if they would not be mistaken for buffoons by trade."

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

DON PEDRO, Prince of Arragon.	DOGBERRY, VERGES, } Two Officers.
JOHN, his bastard Brother.	FRANCIS, a Friar.
CLAUDIO, a young Lord of Florence.	A Sexton.
BENEDICK, a young Gentleman of Padua.	A Boy.
LEONATO, Governor of Messina.	HERO, Daughter to Leonato.
ANTONIO, his Brother.	BEATRICE, Niece to Leonato.
BALTHAZAR, Servant to Don Pedro.	MARGARET, URSULA, } Gentlewomen attending on Hero.
BORACHIO, CONRADE, } Followers of John.	

Messengers, Watchmen, and Attendants.

SCENE, Messina.

ACT I. SCENE I. *Messina. Before* LEONATO'S *House.*

Enter LEONATO, HERO, BEATRICE, *with a Messenger.*

Leon. I learn in this letter that Don Pedro of Arragon comes this night to Messina.

Mess. He is very near by this: he was not three leagues off when I left him.

Leon. How many gentlemen have you lost in this action?

Mess. But few of any sort, and none of name.

Leon. A victory is twice itself when the achiever brings home full numbers. I find here that Don Pedro hath bestowed much honour on a young Florentine called Claudio.

Mess. Much deserv'd on his part, and equally remembered by Don Pedro. He hath borne himself beyond the promise of his age; doing, in the figure of a lamb, the feats of a lion: he hath, indeed, better better'd expectation than you must expect of me to tell you how.

Leon. He hath an uncle here in Messina will be very much glad of it.

Mess. I have already delivered him letters, and there appears much joy in him; even so much, that joy could not show itself modest enough without a badge of bitterness.[1]

Leon. Did he break out into tears?

Mess. In great measure.

Leon. A kind overflow of kindness: there are no faces

[1] This is an idea which Shakespeare apparently delighted to introduce. It occurs in *Macbeth*: "My plenteous joys, wanton in fulness, seek to hide themselves in drops of sorrow."

truer than those that are so wash'd. How much better is it to weep at joy than to joy at weeping!

Beat. I pray you, is Signior Montanto [2] return'd from the wars or no?

Mess. I know none of that name, lady: there was none such in the army of any sort.[3]

Leon. What is he that you ask for, niece?

Hero. My cousin means Signior Benedick of Padua.

Mess. O, he's return'd; and as pleasant as ever he was.

Beat. He set up his bills [4] here in Messina, and challeng'd Cupid at the flight; [5] and my uncle's Fool, reading the challenge, subscrib'd for Cupid, and challeng'd him at the bird-bolt. — I pray you, how many hath he kill'd and eaten in these wars? But how many hath he kill'd? for indeed I promis'd to eat all of his killing.

Leon. Faith, niece, you tax Signior Benedick too much; but he'll be meet with you,[6] I doubt it not.

Mess. He hath done good service, lady, in these wars.

Beat. You had musty victual, and he hath holp to eat it: he is a very valiant trencher-man; he hath an excellent stomach.

Mess. And a good soldier too, lady.

Beat. And a good soldier to a lady: — but what is he to a lord?

Mess. A lord to a lord, a man to a man; stuff'd with all honourable virtues.

Beat. It is so, indeed; he is no less than a stuff'd man: but for the stuffing,[7] — well, we are all mortal.

Leon. You must not, sir, mistake my niece. There is a kind of merry war betwixt Signior Benedick and her: they never meet but there's a skirmish of wit between them.

Beat. Alas, he gets nothing by that! In our last conflict

[2] *Montanto* is an old term of the fencing-school, humorously or sarcastically applied here in the sense of a *bravado*.

[3] *Sort* is here used in the sense of *rank*. So in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, iii. 2: "None of nobler *sort* would so offend a virgin;" and in *Measure for Measure*, iv. 4: "Give notice to such men of *sort* and suit as are to meet him."

[4] This phrase was in common use for affixing a printed notice in some public place, long before Shakespeare's time, and long after.

[5] The *flight* was a long, slender, sharp arrow, such as Cupid shot with; so called because used for *flying* long distances, and to distinguish it from the *bird-bolt*, a short, thick, blunt arrow, used in a lower kind of archery, and permitted to fools. "A fool's bolt is soon shot," is an old proverb. See vol. i. page 186, note 7.

[6] He'll be *even* with you; or, as we should say, he'll be *up with* you.

[7] Mede, in his *Discourses on Scripture*, speaking of Adam, says, "He whom God had *stuffed* with so many excellent qualities." Beatrice starts an idea at the words *stuffed man*, and prudently checks herself in the pursuit of it, as leading to an indelicate allusion.

four of his five wits [8] went halting off, and now is the whole man govern'd with one: so that if he have wit enough to keep himself warm, let him bear it for a difference [9] between himself and his horse; for it is all the wealth that he hath left, to be known a reasonable creature. — Who is his companion now? He hath every month a new sworn brother.

Mes. Is't possible?

Beat. Very easily possible: he wears his faith but as the fashion of his hat; it ever changes with the next block.[10]

Mess. I see, lady, the gentleman is not in your books.[11]

Beat. No; an he were, I would burn my study. But, I pray you, who is his companion? Is there no young squarer [12] now that will make a voyage with him to the Devil?

Mess. He is most in the company of the right noble Claudio.

Beat. O Lord, he will hang upon him like a disease: he is sooner caught than the pestilence, and the taker runs presently mad. God help the noble Claudio! if he have caught the Benedick, it will cost him a thousand pound ere he be cur'd.

Mess. I will hold friends with you, lady.

Beat. Do, good friend.

Leon. You'll ne'er run mad, niece.

Beat. No, not till a hot January.

Mess. Don Pedro is approach'd.

Enter Don PEDRO, *Don* JOHN, CLAUDIO, BENEDICK, BALTHAZAR, *and others.*

D. Pedro. Good Signior Leonato, you are come to meet your trouble. The fashion of the world is to avoid cost, and you encounter it.

Leon. Never came trouble to my house in the likeness of your Grace: for, trouble being gone, comfort should remain; but, when you depart from me, sorrow abides, and happiness takes his leave.

D. Pedro. You embrace your charge too willingly. — I think this is your daughter.

[8] In Shakespeare's time, *the five wits* was used to denote both the five senses, and the intellectual powers, which were thought to correspond with the senses in number. Here it means the latter.

[9] This is an heraldic term. So Ophelia says, "You must wear your rue with a *difference*." See vol. i. page 607, note 31.

[10] The mould on which a hat is formed. It is here used for *shape* or *fashion*. See vol. ii. page 466, note 19.

[11] A phrase from the custom of servants and retainers being entered in the books of those to whom they were attached. *To be in one's books* was *to be in favour*. That this was the sense of the phrase appears from Florio: "*Casso*. Cashier'd, crossed, cancelled, or put *out of booke* and checke roule."

[12] That is *quarreller*. To *square* was to take a posture of defiance or of resistance. See page 18, note 6. Also, vol. ii. page 593, note 7.

Leon. Her mother hath many times told me so.

Bene. Were you in doubt, sir, that you ask'd her?

Leon. Signior Benedick, no; for then were you a child.

D. Pedro. You have it full, Benedick: we may guess by this what you are, being a man. — Truly, the lady fathers herself:[13] — Be happy, lady; for you are like an honourable father.

Bene. If Signior Leonato be her father, she would not have his head on her shoulders for all Messina, as like him as she is.

Beat. I wonder that you will still be talking, Signior Benedick: nobody marks you.

Bene. What, my dear Lady Disdain! are you yet living?

Beat. Is it possible disdain should die, while she hath such meet food to feed it as Signior Benedick? Courtesy itself must convert to disdain, if you come in her presence.

Bene. Then is courtesy a turncoat. — But it is certain I am loved of all ladies, only you excepted: and I would I could find in my heart that I had not a hard heart; for, truly, I love none.

Beat. A dear happiness to women: they would else have been troubled with a pernicious suitor. I thank God and my cold blood, I am of your humour for that: I had rather hear my dog bark at a crow than a man swear he loves me.

Bene. God keep your ladyship still in that mind! so some gentleman or other shall 'scape a predestinate scratch'd face.

Beat. Scratching could not make it worse, an 'twere such a face as yours.

Bene. Well, you are a rare parrot-teacher.

Beat. A bird of my tongue is better than a beast of yours.

Bene. I would my horse had the speed of your tongue, and so good a continuer. But keep your way o' God's name; I have done.

Beat. You always end with a jade's trick:[14] I know you of old.

D. Pedro. This is the sum of all: Leonato, — Signior Claudio and Signior Benedick, — my dear friend Leonato hath invited you all. I tell him we shall stay here at the least a month; and he heartily prays some occasion may detain us longer: I dare swear he is no hypocrite, but prays from his heart.

Leon. If you swear, my lord, you shall not be forsworn. — Let me bid you welcome, my lord: being reconciled to the Prince your brother, I owe you all duty.

[13] This phrase is said to be common in Dorsetshire: "Jack fathers himself," is like his father.

[14] *Jade* was used of an unreliable or balky horse.

John. I thank you: I am not of many words, but I thank you.

Leon. Please it your Grace lead on?

D. Pedro. Your hand, Leonato; we will go together.

[*Exeunt all but* BENEDICK *and* CLAUDIO.

Claud. Benedick, didst thou note the daughter of Signior Leonato?

Bene. I noted her not;[15] but I look'd on her.

Claud. Is she not a modest young lady?

Bene. Do you question me, as an honest man should do, for my simple true judgment; or would you have me speak after my custom, as being a professed tyrant to their sex?

Claud. No; I pray thee speak in sober judgment.

Bene. Why, i' faith, methinks she's too low for a high praise, too brown for a fair praise, and too little for a great praise: only this commendation I can afford her, — that were she other than she is, she were unhandsome; and being no other but as she is, I do not like her.

Claud. Thou think'st I am in sport: I pray thee tell me truly how thou lik'st her.

Bene. Would you buy her, that you inquire after her?

Claud. Can the world buy such a jewel?

Bene. Yea, and a case to put it into. But speak you this with a sad brow? or do you play the flouting Jack, to tell us Cupid is a good hare-finder, and Vulcan a rare carpenter?[16] Come, in what key shall a man take you, to go in the song?[17]

Claud. In mine eye she is the sweetest lady that ever I look'd on.

Bene. I can see yet without spectacles, and I see no such matter: there's her cousin, an she were not possess'd with a fury, exceeds her as much in beauty as the first of May doth the last of December. But I hope you have no intent to turn husband, have you?

Claud. I would scarce trust myself, though I had sworn the contrary, if Hero would be my wife.

Bene. Is't come to this, i' faith? Hath not the world one man but he will wear his cap with suspicion?[18] Shall I never see a bachelor of threescore again? Go to, i' faith; an thou wilt needs thrust thy neck into a yoke, wear the print of it, and sigh away Sundays.[19] Look, Don Pedro is returned to seek you.

[15] A play upon *note*, which was used, as it still is, of musical sounds.

[16] Do you scoff and mock in telling us that blind Cupid has the sight of a greyhound, and that Vulcan, a blacksmith, is a good carpenter?

[17] To join you, go along with you, in singing.

[18] Subject his head to the disquiet of jealousy.

[19] Alluding to the manner in which the Puritans usually spent Sunday, with sighs and groanings, and other affected or emphatic marks of devotion.

Re-enter Don PEDRO.

D. Pedro. What secret hath held you here, that you followed not to Leonato's?

Bene. I would your Grace would constrain me to tell.

D. Pedro. I charge thee on thy allegiance.

Bene. You hear, Count Claudio: I can be secret as a dumb man, I would have you think so; but on my allegiance, — mark you this, on my allegiance. — He is in love. With whom? — now that is your Grace's part. — Mark how short his answer is; — With Hero, Leonato's short daughter.

Claud. If this were so, so were it utter'd.

Bene. Like the old tale, my lord: *It is not so, nor 'twas not so; but, indeed, God forbid it should be so.*[20]

Claud. If my passion change not shortly, God forbid it should be otherwise.

D. Pedro. Amen, if you love her; for the lady is very well worthy.

Claud. You speak this to fetch me in, my lord.

D. Pedro. By my troth, I speak my thought.

Claud. And in faith, my lord, I spoke mine.

Bene. And, by my two faiths and troths, my lord, I spoke mine.

[20] This is the burden of a fearful old tale, related by Mr. Blakeway, as follows: Mr. Fox, a bachelor, made it his business to decoy or force young women to his house, that he might have their skeletons to adorn his chambers with. Near by dwelt a family, the lady Mary and her two brothers, whom Mr. Fox often visited. One day, the lady thought to amuse herself by calling upon Mr. Fox, as he had often invited her to do. Knocking some time, but finding no one at home, she at length opened and went in. Over the portal was written, *Be bold, be bold, but not too bold.* Going forward, she saw the same over the stairway, and again over the door of the chamber at the head of the stairs. Opening this door, she saw at once what sort of work was carried on there. Retreating hastily, she saw out of the window Mr Fox coming, holding a sword in one hand, and with the other dragging a young lady by the hair. She had just time to hide herself under the stairs before he entered. As he was going up stairs the young lady caught hold of the banister with her hand, whereon was a rich bracelet; he then cut off her hand, and it fell, bracelet and all, into Mary's lap, who took it, and as soon as she could, hastened home. A few days after, Mr. Fox came to dine with her and her brothers. As they were entertaining each other with stories, she said she would tell them a strange dream she had lately had. She said, — I dreamed, Mr. Fox, that as you had often invited me to your house, I went there one morning. When I came, I knocked, but no one answered; when I opened the door, over the hall was written, *Be bold, be bold, but not too bold.* But, said she, turning to Mr. Fox and smiling, — *It is not so, nor it was not so.* Then she went on with the story, repeating this at every turn, till she came to the room full of dead bodies, when Mr. Fox took up the burden of the tale, saying, — *'It is not so, nor it was not so, and God forbid it should be so;* which he kept repeating at every turn of the dreadful story, till she came to his cutting off the lady's hand; then, upon his saying the same words, she replied, — *But it is so, and it was so, and here the hand I have to show,* at the same time producing the hand and bracelet from her lap; whereupon the men drew their swords, and killed Mr. Fox.

Claud. That I love her, I feel.

D. Pedro. That she is worthy, I know.

Bene. That I neither feel how she should be loved, nor know how she should be worthy, is the opinion that fire cannot melt out of me: I will die in it at the stake.

D. Pedro. Thou wast ever an obstinate heretic in the despite of beauty.

Claud. And never could maintain his part but in the force of his will.[21]

Bene. That a woman was my mother, I thank her; that she brought me up, I likewise give her most humble thanks: but all women shall pardon me. Because I will not do them the wrong to mistrust any, I will do myself the right to trust none; and the fine[22] is, (for the which I may go the finer,) I will live a bachelor.

D. Pedro. I shall see thee, ere I die, look pale with love.

Bene. With anger, with sickness, or with hunger, my lord; not with love: prove that ever I lose more blood with love than I will get again with drinking, pick out mine eyes with a ballad-maker's pen, and hang me up for the sign of blind Cupid.

D. Pedro. Well, if ever thou dost fall from this faith, thou wilt prove a notable argument.

Bene. If I do, hang me in a bottle like a cat, and shoot at me;[23] and he that hits me, let him be clapp'd on the shoulder, and call'd Adam.[24]

D. Pedro. Well, as time shall try:

In time the savage bull doth bear the yoke.[25]

Bene. The savage bull may; but if ever the sensible Benedick bear it, pluck off the bull's horns, and set them in my forehead: and let me be vilely painted, and in such great letters as they write, *Here is good horse to hire*, let them signify under my sign *Here you may see Benedick the married man.*

Claud. If this should ever happen, thou wouldst be hornmad.

D. Pedro. Nay, if Cupid have not spent all his quiver in Venice,[26] thou wilt quake for this shortly.

[21] Alluding to the definition of a heretic in the schools.

[22] *The fine* is the conclusion.

[23] It seems to have been one of the cruel sports of the time to enclose a cat in a wooden tub or bottle suspended aloft to be shot at.

[24] Alluding to Adam Bell, "a passing good archer," who, with Clym of the Clough and William of Cloudesly, were outlaws as famous in the North of England as Robin Hood and his fellows were in the midland counties.

[25] This line is from Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy*.

[26] Venice bore much the same character in Shakespeare's time as Paris does in ours; being celebrated as the great metropolis of profligate intrigue and pleasure.

Bene. I look for an earthquake too, then.

D. Pedro. Well, you will temporize with the hours. In the mean time, good Signior Benedick, repair to Leonato's: commend me to him, and tell him I will not fail him at supper; for indeed he hath made great preparation.

Bene. I have almost matter enough in me for such an embassage; and so I commit you —

Claud. To the tuition of God: From my house (if I had it) —

D. Pedro. The sixth of July: Your loving friend, Benedick.

Bene. Nay, mock not, mock not. The body of your discourse is sometime guarded with fragments, and the guards are but slightly basted on neither: ere you flout old ends any further,[27] examine your conscience: and so I leave you. [*Exit.*

Claud. My liege, your Highness now may do me good.

D. Pedro. My love is thine to use:[28] teach it but how,
And thou shalt see how apt it is to learn
Any hard lesson that may do thee good.

Claud. Hath Leonato any son, my lord?

D. Pedro. No child but Hero; she's his only heir.
Dost thou affect her, Claudio?

Claud. O, my lord,
When you went onward on this ended action,
I look'd upon her with a soldier's eye,
That lik'd, but had a rougher task in hand
Than to drive liking to the name of love:
But now I am return'd, and that war-thoughts
Have left their places vacant, in their rooms
Come thronging soft and delicate desires,
All prompting me how fair young Hero is,
Saying, I lik'd her ere I went to wars.

D. Pedro. Thou wilt be like a lover presently,
And tire the hearer with a book of words.
If thou dost love fair Hero, cherish it;
And I will break with her and with her father,[29]
And thou shalt have her. Was't not to this end
That thou begann'st to twist so fine a story?

Claud. How sweetly do you minister to love,

[27] *Guards* were trimmings, ornaments of dress, what we call *facings*. *Old ends* probably means the conclusions of letters, which were frequently couched in the quaint forms used above.

[28] The old copies have *teach* instead of *use*. *Teach* does not at all fit the place, and probably got repeated, by the printer or transcriber, from the next word. The change was proposed by Walker.

[29] In old language, to *break with* any one is to *open* or *broach* a matter *to* him. The phrase now means to *fall out*, *quarrel*, or *break friendship*, with any one.

That know love's grief by his complexion!
But, lest my liking might too sudden seem,
I would have salv'd it with a longer treatise.

D. Pedro. What need the bridge much broader than the flood?

The fairest grant is to necessity.[30]
Look, what will serve, is fit: 'tis once,[31] thou lovest;
And I will fit thee with the remedy.
I know we shall have revelling to-night:
I will assume thy part in some disguise,
And tell fair Hero I am Claudio;
And in her bosom I'll unclasp my heart,
And take her hearing prisoner with the force
And strong encounter of my amorous tale:
Then after to her father will I break;
And the conclusion is, she shall be thine.
In practice let us put it presently. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *The Same. A Room in* LEONATO'S *House.*

Enter, severally, LEONATO *and* ANTONIO.

Leon. How now, brother! Where is my cousin, your son? Hath he provided this music?

Ant. He is very busy about it. But, brother, I can tell you strange news, that you yet dream'd not of.

Leon. Are they good?

Ant. As the event stamps them: but they have a good cover; they show well outward. The Prince and Count Claudio, walking in a thick-pleached alley in my orchard,[1] were thus much overheard by a man of mine: The Prince discovered to Claudio that he loved my niece your daughter, and meant to acknowledge it this night in a dance; and if he found her accordant, he meant to take the present time by the top, and instantly break with you of it.

[30] The old copies read "is *the* necessity;" which may perhaps be strained into some consistent sense, but hardly. Hanmer alters *grant* to *plea*, and Collier's second folio to *ground*; but Hayley's conjecture of *to* instead of *the* seems the best.

[31] This use of *once* has been something of a puzzle to the editors. The word seems to have been occasionally used in the sense of *enough*; and such is the aptest meaning here. So in *Coriolanus*, ii. 3: "*Once*, if he do require our voices; we ought not to deny him." Also, in *The Comedy of Errors*, iii. 1:

> "*Once* this; your long experience of her wisdom,
> Her sober virtue, years, and modesty,
> Plead on her part."

[1] *Pleached* is the same as *pleated* or *plaited*, that is, *folded* or *interwoven*. See vol. ii. page 657, note 8. — *Orchard* formerly meant the same as *garden*. See vol. i. page 449, note 1.

Leon. Hath the fellow any wit that told you this?

Ant. A good sharp fellow: I will send for him; and question him yourself.

Leon. No, no; we will hold it as a dream till it appear itself:[2] but I will acquaint my daughter withal, that she may be the better prepared for an answer, if peradventure this be true. Go you, and tell her of it. [*Exit* ANTONIO. — *Several persons cross the stage.*] Cousin,[3] you know what you have to do. — O I cry you mercy, friend; go you with me, and I will use your skill: — Good cousin, have a care this busy time. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. *The Same. Another Room in* LEONATO'S *House.*

Enter Don JOHN *and* CONRADE.

Con. What the good-year,[1] my lord! why are you thus out of measure sad?

John. There is no measure in the occasion that breeds it; therefore the sadness is without limit.

Con. You should hear reason.

John. And when I have heard it, what blessing bringeth it?

Con. If not a present remedy, yet a patient sufferance.

John. I wonder that thou, being (as thou say'st thou art) born under Saturn,[2] goest about to apply a moral medicine to a mortifying mischief. I cannot hide what I am:[3] I must be sad when I have cause, and smile at no man's jests; eat when I have stomach, and wait for no man's leisure; sleep when I am drowsy, and tend to no man's business; laugh when I am merry, and claw[4] no man in his humour.

[2] *Appear* should probably be *approve*, in its old sense of *prove true*. We have instances elsewhere of *appear* misprinted for *approve*.

[3] The old copies have the plural, *cousins*, here; but the use of *cousin* in the first speech of the scene, and also at the end of this speech, shows that it should be *cousin* here. Leonato sees his brother's son crossing the stage among the other persons, and stops him. *Cousin* was constantly used for *nephew*, *niece*, or, more generally still, for *kinsman*. See vol. i. page 31, note 12.

[1] *Good-year* is best explained as a corruption of the French *goujeer*, the old name of what was known far and wide as the *morbus Gallicus*. If that explanation be right, which some doubt, it presents a strange instance of the transmogrification of words into the reverse of their original senses.

[2] In old astrological language, to be "born under Saturn" was to have a "Saturnine complexion," as it was called; that is, to be of a moping, melancholy temper. See vol. i. page 133, note 4.

[3] An envious and unsocial mind, too proud to give pleasure and too sullen to receive it, often endeavours to hide its malignity from the world and from itself, under the plainness of simple honesty or the dignity of haughty independence.

[4] To *claw*, in the sense of to scratch, and to ease by scratching, was often used for to *soothe*, *flatter*, or *curry favour*. Thus, in Howell's *Letters:*

Con. Yea, but you must not make the full show of this till you may do it without controlment. You have of late stood out against your brother, and he hath ta'en you newly into his grace;[5] where it is impossible you should take true root but by the fair weather that you make yourself: it is needful that you frame the season for your own harvest.

John. I had rather be a canker in a hedge than a rose in his grace;[6] and it better fits my blood to be disdain'd of all than to fashion a carriage to rob love from any: in this, though I cannot be said to be a flattering honest man, it must not be denied but I am a plain-dealing villain. I am trusted with a muzzle, and enfranchis'd with a clog; therefore I have decreed not to sing in my cage. If I had my mouth, I would bite; if I had my liberty, I would do my liking: in the mean time, let me be that I am, and seek not to alter me.

Con. Can you make no use of your discontent?

John. I make all use of it, for I use it only.[7] — Who comes here? —

Enter BORACHIO.

What news, Borachio?

Bora. I came yonder from a great supper: the Prince your brother is royally entertained by Leonato; and I can give you intelligence of an intended marriage.

John. Will it serve for any model[8] to build mischief on? What is he for a fool that betroths himself to unquietness?

Bora. Marry, it is your brother's right hand.

John. Who? the most exquisite Claudio?

Bora. Even he.

John. A proper squire! And who, and who? which way looks he?

Bora. Marry, on Hero, the daughter and heir of Leonato.

John. A very forward March chick![9] How came you to this?

Bora. Being entertain'd for a perfumer, as I was smoking a musty room,[10] comes me the Prince and Claudio, hand in

"Here it is not the style to *claw* and compliment with the King" *Claw-back* occurs in the same sense, both as a noun and a verb.

[5] This use of *grace* in the sense of *favour* was very common.

[6] The meaning is, I would rather be a wild *dog-rose* in a hedge than a garden rose of his cherishing. Richardson says that in Devonshire the dog-rose is called *canker-rose*. See, also, vol. i. page 265, note 15.

[7] I use *nothing else;* have no other counsellor.

[8] *Model* is here used in an unusual sense; but Bullokar explains it, "*Model*, the *platforme*, or form of any thing."

[9] A presumptuous or aspiring *youngster;* thinking to marry much above his rank Claudio is regarded as a pushing upstart.

[10] Such a perfuming of rooms was often resorted to as a substitute for cleanliness. So in Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy:* "The smoke of juniper is in great request with us at Oxford, to *sweeten* our chambers."

hand, in sad conference:[11] I whipt me behind the arras; and there heard it agreed upon, that the Prince should woo Hero for himself, and, having obtain'd her, give her to Count Claudio.

John. Come, come, let us thither: this may prove food to my displeasure. That young start-up hath all the glory of my overthrow: if I can cross him any way, I bless myself every way: You are both sure,[12] and will assist me?

Con. To the death, my lord.

John. Let us to the great supper: their cheer is the greater that I am subdued. Would the cook were of my mind!—Shall we go prove what's to be done?

Bora. We'll wait upon your lordship. [*Exeunt.*

ACT II. Scene I. *Messina. A Hall in* Leonato's *House.*

Enter Leonato, Antonio, Hero, Beatrice, *and others.*

Leon. Was not Count John here at supper?

Ant. I saw him not.

Beat. How tartly that gentleman looks! I never can see him but I am heart-burn'd an hour after.

Hero. He is of a very melancholy disposition.

Beat. He were an excellent man that were made just in the mid-way between him and Benedick: the one is too like an image, and says nothing; and the other too like my lady's eldest son, evermore tattling.

Leon. Then half Signior Benedick's tongue in Count John's mouth, and half Count John's melancholy in Signior Benedick's face,—

Beat. With a good leg and a good foot, uncle, and money enough in his purse, such a man would win any woman in the world,—if he could get her good-will.

Leon. By my troth, niece, thou wilt never get thee a husband, if thou be so shrewd of thy tongue.

Ant. In faith, she's too curst.

Beat. Too curst is more than curst: I shall lessen God's sending that way; for it is said, *God sends a curst cow short horns;* but to a cow too curst he sends none.

Leon. So, by being too curst, God will send you no horns.

[11] *Sad*, in the sense of *serious, earnest*, or *grave*. See vol. i. page 218, note 1.—*Arras* were the tapestries with which rooms were lined before plastering grew into use; so named from a town in France where they were made. See vol. i. page 291, note 51, and page 554, note 16.

[12] *Sure* is still used sometimes in the sense of to *be relied upon*.

Beat. Just, if he send me no husband; for the which blessing I am at Him upon my knees every morning and evening. Lord, I could not endure a husband with a beard on his face: I had rather lie in the woollen.

Leon. You may light upon a husband that hath no beard.

Beat. What should I do with him? dress him in my apparel, and make him my waiting-gentlewoman? He that hath a beard is more than a youth; and he that hath no beard is less than a man: and he that is more than a youth is not for me; and he that is less than a man, I am not for him: therefore I will even take sixpence in earnest of the bear-ward, and lead his apes into Hell.

Leon. Well, then, go you into Hell?

Beat. No; but to the gate; and there will the Devil meet me, with horns on his head, and say, *Get you to Heaven, Beatrice, get you to Heaven; here's no place for you maids:* so deliver I up my apes, and away to Saint Peter: for the Heavens,[1] he shows me where the bachelors sit, and there live we as merry as the day is long.

Ant. [*To* HERO.] Well, niece, I trust you will be rul'd by your father.

Beat. Yes, faith; it is my cousin's duty to make curtsy, and say, *Father, as it please you:* — but yet for all that, cousin, let him be a handsome fellow, or else make another curtsy, and say, *Father, as it please me.*

Leon. Well, niece, I hope to see you one day fitted with a husband.

Beat. Not till God make men of some other metal than earth. Would it not grieve a woman to be over-master'd with a piece of valiant dust? to make an account of her life to a clod of wayward marl? No, uncle, I'll none: Adam's sons are my brethren; and, truly, I hold it a sin to match in my kindred.

Leon. Daughter, remember what I told you: if the Prince do solicit you in that kind, you know your answer.

Beat. The fault will be in the music, cousin, if you be not wooed in good time: if the Prince be too important,[2] tell him there is measure[3] in every thing, and so dance out the answer. For, hear me, Hero: Wooing, wedding, and repent-

[1] *For the Heavens* is probably intended here as a petty oath. The passage is sometimes printed, "and away to Saint Peter for the Heavens: he shows me," &c.

[2] *Important* and *importunate* were sometimes used indiscriminately. See vol. ii. page 459, note 4.

[3] A *measure*, in old language, besides its ordinary meaning, signified also a grave, solemn *dance* with slow and measured steps like the minuet; and therefore described as "full of state and ancientry."

ing, is as a Scotch jig, a measure, and a cinque-pace:[4] the first suit is hot and hasty, like a Scotch jig, and full as fantastical; the wedding mannerly-modest, as a measure, full of state and ancientry; and then comes repentance, and with his bad legs falls into the cinque-pace faster and faster, till he sink into his grave.

Leon. Cousin, you apprehend passing shrewdly.

Beat. I have a good eye, uncle: I can see a church by daylight.

Leon. The revellers are entering, brother: make good room.

Enter Don PEDRO, CLAUDIO, BENEDICK, BALTHAZAR, *Don* JOHN, BORACHIO, MARGARET, URSULA, *and others, masked.*

D. Pedro. Lady, will you walk about with your friend?

Hero. So you walk softly, and look sweetly, and say nothing, I am yours for the walk; and especially when I walk away.

D. Pedro. With me in your company?

Hero. I may say so, when I please.

D. Pedro. And when please you to say so?

Hero. When I like your favour; for God defend, the lute should be like the case![5]

D. Pedro. My visor is Philemon's roof; within the house is Jove.[6]

Hero. Why, then your visor should be thatch'd.

D. Pedro. Speak low, if you speak love.

[*Takes her aside.*

Balth. Well, I would you did like me.

Marg. So would not I, for your own sake; for I have many ill qualities.

Balth. Which is one?

Marg. I say my prayers aloud.

Balth. I love you the better: the hearers may cry, Amen.

Marg. God match me with a good dancer!

Balth. Amen.

Marg. And God keep him out of my sight, when the dance is done!—Answer, clerk.[7]

[4] The *cinque-pace* was a dance, the measures whereof were regulated by the number five.

[5] God forbid that your face should be like your mask.

[6] Alluding to the fable of Baucis and Philemon in *Ovid*, who describes the old couple as living in a thatched cottage: *Stipulis et cannâ tecta palustri*; which Golding renders: "The *roofe* thereof was *thatched* all with straw and fennish reede." See vol. i. page 66, note 4.

[7] The *clerk* here meant is the clerk of the parish, a part of whose duty was to lead the responses of the congregation in the religious service.

Balth. No more words: the clerk is answered.

Urs. I know you well enough; you are Signior Antonio.

Ant. At a word, I am not.

Urs. I know you by the waggling of your head.

Ant. To tell you true, I counterfeit him.

Urs. You could never do him so ill-well, unless you were the very man. Here's his dry hand up and down:[8] you are he, you are he.

Ant. At a word, I am not.

Urs. Come, come; do you think I do not know you by your excellent wit? Can virtue hide itself? Go to, mum, you are he: graces will appear, and there's an end.

Beat. Will you not tell me who told you so?

Bene. No, you shall pardon me.

Beat. Nor will you not tell me who you are?

Bene. Not now.

Beat. That I was disdainful, and that I had my good wit out of the *Hundred Merry Tales:*[9] — Well, this was Signior Benedick that said so.

Bene. What's he?

Beat. I am sure you know him well enough.

Bene. Not I, believe me.

Beat. Did he never make you laugh?

Bene. I pray you, what is he?

Beat. Why, he is the Prince's jester: a very dull Fool; his only gift is in devising impossible slanders: none but libertines delight in him; and the commendation is not in his wit, but in his villainy; for he both pleases men and angers them, and then they laugh at him and beat him. I am sure he is in the Fleet: I would he had boarded me.[10]

Bene. When I know the gentleman, I'll tell him what you say.

Beat. Do, do: he'll but break a comparison or two on me; which, peradventure, not mark'd, or not laugh'd at, strikes him into melancholy; and then there's a partridge' wing saved, for the Fool will eat no supper that night. [*Music within.*] We must follow the leaders.

Bene. In every good thing.

Beat. Nay, if they lead to any ill, I will leave them at the next turning. [*Dance. Then exeunt all but Don* JOHN, BORACHIO, *and* CLAUDIO.

[8] So, in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, ii. 3, Launce says, "Here's my mother's breath *up and down*." The phrase apparently means *exactly, precisely.*

[9] This was the term for a *jest-book* in Shakespeare's time, from a popular collection of that name, about which the commentators were much puzzled, until a large fragment was discovered in 1815, by the Rev. J. Conybeare, Professor of Poetry in Oxford. It was printed by Rastell, and therefore must have been published previous to 1533.

[10] *Boarded*, besides its usual meaning, signified *accosted.*

John. Sure my brother is amorous on Hero, and hath withdrawn her father to break with him about it. The ladies follow her, and but one visor remains.

Bora. And that is Claudio: I know him by his bearing.

John. Are not you Signior Benedick?

Claud. You know me well; I am he.

John. Signior, you are very near my brother in his love: he is enamour'd on Hero. I pray you dissuade him from her; she is no equal for his birth: you may do the part of an honest man in it.

Claud. How know you he loves her?

John. I heard him swear his affection.

Bora. So did I too; and he swore he would marry her to-night.

John. Come, let us to the banquet.

[*Exeunt Don* JOHN *and* BORACHIO.

Claud. Thus answer I in name of Benedick,
But hear these ill news with the ears of Claudio.
'Tis certain so; — the Prince wooes for himself.
Friendship is constant in all other things
Save in the office and affairs of love:
Therefore[11] all hearts in love use their own tongues;
Let every eye negotiate for itself,
And trust no agent; for beauty is a witch,
Against whose charms faith melteth into blood.[12]
This is an accident of hourly proof,
Which I mistrusted not. Farewell, then, Hero!

Re-enter BENEDICK.

Bene. Count Claudio?

Claud. Yea, the same.

Bene. Come, will you go with me?

Claud. Whither?

Bene. Even to the next willow, about your own business, count. What fashion will you wear the garland of? About your neck, like an usurer's chain,[13] or under your arm, like a lieutenant's scarf? You must wear it one way, for the Prince hath got your Hero.

Claud. I wish him joy of her.

Bene. Why, that's spoken like an honest drover: so they

[11] *Let*, which is found in the next line, is understood here.

[12] *Blood* was very often put for *passion* or *impulse*. See vol. i. page 92, note 9, and page 105, note 3.

[13] Chains of gold were in Shakespeare's time worn by wealthy citizens and others, in the same manner as they are now on public occasions by the aldermen of London. Usury was then a common topic of invective.

sell bullocks. But did you think the Prince would have served you thus?

Claud. I pray you, leave me.

Bene. Ho! now you strike like the blind man: 'twas the boy that stole your meat, and you'll beat the post.

Claud. If it will not be, I'll leave you. [*Exit.*

Bene. Alas, poor hurt fowl! Now will he creep into sedges. — But, that my Lady Beatrice should know me, and not know me! The Prince's Fool! — Ha! it may be I go under that title because I am merry. — Yea, but so I am apt to do myself wrong. — I am not so reputed: it is the base, though bitter, disposition of Beatrice[14] that puts the world into her person, and so gives me out.[15] Well, I'll be revenged as I may.

Re-enter Don PEDRO.

D. Pedro. Now, signior, where's the count? Did you see him?

Bene. Troth, my lord, I have played the part of Lady Fame. I found him here as melancholy as a lodge in a warren:[16] I told him, and I think I told him true, that your Grace had got the good-will of his young lady; and I offered him my company to a willow-tree, either to make him a garland, as being forsaken, or to bind him up a rod, as being worthy to be whipp'd.

D. Pedro. To be whipp'd! What's his fault?

Bene. The flat transgression of a school-boy; who, being overjoyed with finding a bird's-nest, shows it his companion, and he steals it.

D. Pedro. Wilt thou make a trust a transgression? The transgression is in the stealer.

Bene. Yet it had not been amiss the rod had been made, and the garland too; for the garland he might have worn himself, and the rod he might have bestowed on you, who, as I take it, have stol'n his bird's-nest.

D. Pedro. I will but teach them to sing, and restore them to the owner.

Bene. If their singing answer your saying, by my faith, you say honestly.

[14] Benedick speaks rather excitedly here, while his ears are burning with what he has just heard. To give the concessive *though* its proper force, *bitter* must be taken, apparently, in the sense of *sharp, witty, satirical.*

[15] That is, fathers her own thoughts upon the world, to make them sting the more.

[16] A most expressive image of dismal loneliness. A *warren* was a place for keeping wild animals, and secured by royal grant against all intruders, for the owner's exclusive sport: so that the special duty of the keeper of it was to maintain an utter solitude about himself and his *lodging.*

D. Pedro. The Lady Beatrice hath a quarrel to you: the gentleman that danc'd with her told her she is much wrong'd by you.

Bene. O, she misus'd me past the endurance of a block! an oak but with one green leaf on it would have answered her; my very visor began to assume life and scold with her. She told me — not thinking I had been myself — that I was the Prince's jester, and that I was duller than a great thaw; huddling jest upon jest, with such impossible conveyance,[17] upon me, that I stood like a man at a mark, with a whole army shooting at me. She speaks poniards, and every word stabs: if her breath were as terrible as her terminations, there were no living near her; she would infect to the north star. I would not marry her, though she were endowed with all that Adam had left him before he transgress'd: she would have made Hercules have turned spit, yea, and have cleft his club to make the fire too. Come, talk not of her: you shall find her the infernal Até in good apparel.[18] I would to God some scholar would conjure her; for certainly, while she is here, a man may live as quiet in Hell as in a sanctuary; and people sin upon purpose, because they would go thither; so, indeed, all disquiet, horror, and perturbation follow her.

D. Pedro. Look, here she comes.

Re-enter CLAUDIO, BEATRICE, HERO, *and* LEONATO.

Bene. Will your Grace command me any service to the world's end? I will go on the slightest errand now to the Antipodes that you can devise to send me on; I will fetch you a toothpicker now from the farthest inch of Asia; bring you the length of Prester John's foot;[19] fetch you a hair of the great Cham's beard; do you any embassage to the Pigmies; — rather than hold three words' conference with this harpy. You have no employment for me?

D. Pedro. None, but to desire your good company.

[17] The Poet several times has *impossible* precisely in the sense of *incredible*. So, before, in this scene: "His only gift is in devising *impossible* slanders." See, also, vol. i. page 216, note 14. The usage is not peculiar to Shakespeare.

[18] Upon this passage Warburton remarks, and Collier endorses him, that "the ancient poets and painters represent the *Furies in rags*." Até, however, was not a Fury, but the daughter of Jupiter, and goddess of mischief and discord.

[19] How difficult this had been, may be guessed from Butler's account of that distinguished John:

> "While like the mighty Prester John,
> Whose person none dares look upon,
> But is preserv'd in close disguise
> From being made cheap to vulgar eyes."

Bene. O God, sir, here's a dish I love not: I cannot endure my Lady Tongue. [*Exit.*

D. Pedro. Come, lady, come; you have lost the heart of Signior Benedick.

Beat. Indeed, my lord, he lent it me awhile; and I gave him use[20] for it, — a double heart for his single one: marry, once before he won it of me with false dice; therefore your Grace may well say I have lost it.

D. Pedro. You have put him down, lady, you have put him down.

Beat. So I would not he should do me, my lord. I have brought Count Claudio, whom you sent me to seek.

D. Pedro. Why, how now, count! wherefore are you sad?

Claud. Not sad, my lord.

D. Pedro. How then? Sick?

Claud. Neither, my lord.

Beat. The count is neither sad, nor sick, nor merry, nor well; but civil, count, — civil as an orange,[21] and something of that jealous complexion.

D. Pedro. I' faith, lady, I think your blazon to be true; though, I'll be sworn, if he be so, his conceit is false.[22] — Here, Claudio, I have wooed in thy name, and fair Hero is won: I have broke with her father, and, his good-will obtained, name the day of marriage, and God give thee joy!

Leon. Count, take of me my daughter, and with her my fortunes: his Grace hath made the match, and all grace say Amen to it!

Beat. Speak, count; 'tis your cue.

Claud. Silence is the perfectest herald of joy: I were but little happy, if I could say how much. — Lady, as you are mine, I am yours: I give away myself for you, and dote upon the exchange.

Beat. Speak, cousin; or, if you cannot, stop his mouth with a kiss, and let not him speak neither.

D. Pedro. In faith, lady, you have a merry heart.

Beat. Yea, my lord; I thank it, poor fool, it keeps on the windy side of care. — My cousin tells him in his ear that he is in her heart.

Claud. And so she doth, cousin.

Beat. Good Lord, for alliance![23] — Thus goes every one

[20] *Use* is *interest.*

[21] A quibble; alluding to the *Seville orange*, a fruit then well known in London.

[22] *Conceit* was always used in a good sense; for *conception* or *imagination.* See vol. i. page 102, note 18.

[23] *Good Lord, for alliance!* seems to mean, — Good Lord, how matrimony prospers!

to the world but I;[24] and I am sun-burn'd:[25] I may sit in a corner, and cry Heigh-ho, for a husband!

D. Pedro. Lady Beatrice, I will get you one.

Beat. I would rather have one of your father's getting. Hath your Grace ne'er a brother like you?

D. Pedro. Will you have me, lady?

Beat. No, my lord, unless I might have another for working-days: your Grace is too costly to wear every day. But, I beseech your Grace, pardon me: I was born to speak all mirth and no matter.

D. Pedro. Your silence most offends me, and to be merry best becomes you; for, out of question, you were born in a merry hour.

Beat. No, sure, my lord; my mother cried; but then there was a star danc'd, and under that was I born. — Cousins, God give you joy!

Leon. Niece, will you look to those things I told you of?

Beat. I cry you mercy,[26] uncle. — By your Grace's pardon. [*Exit.*

D. Pedro. By my troth, a pleasant-spirited lady.

Leon. There's little of the melancholy element in her, my lord: she is never sad but when she sleeps; and not ever sad then; for I have heard my daughter say, she hath often dream'd of unhappiness,[27] and wak'd herself with laughing.

D. Pedro. She cannot endure to hear tell of a husband.

Leon. O, by no means: she mocks all her wooers out of suit.

D. Pedro. She were an excellent wife for Benedick.

Leon. O Lord, my lord, if they were but a week married, they would talk themselves mad!

D. Pedro. Count Claudio, when mean you to go to church.

Claud. To-morrow, my lord: Time goes on crutches till love have all his rites.

Leon. Not till Monday, my dear son, which is hence a just seven-night; and a time too brief, too, to have all things answer my mind.

D. Pedro. Come, you shake the head at so long a breathing: but, I warrant thee, Claudio, the time shall not go dully by us. I will, in the interim, undertake one of Hercules'

[24] *Going to the world* was a phrase for getting married, in contradistinction from going to the Church, which implied vows of celibacy. See vol. i. page 89, note 1.

[25] *I am sun-burn'd* means, I have lost my beauty, and so am not one of Hymen's prizes. Thus, in *Troilus and Cressida*, i. 3: "The Grecian dames were *sun-burn'd*, and not worth the splinter of a lance."

[26] "I cry you mercy" is I ask your pardon.

[27] That is, *mischief*. *Unhappy* was often used for *mischievous*, as we now say an *unlucky* boy for a *mischievous* boy. See vol. ii. page 213, note 3.

labours; which is, to bring Signior Benedick and the Lady Beatrice into a mountain of affection the one with the other. I would fain have it a match; and I doubt not but to fashion it, if you three will but minister such assistance as I shall give you direction.

Leon. My lord, I am for you, though it cost me ten nights' watchings.

Claud. And I, my lord.

D. Pedro. And you too, gentle Hero?

Hero. I will do any modest office, my lord, to help my cousin to a good husband.

D. Pedro. And Benedick is not the unhopefullest husband that I know. Thus far can I praise him; he is of a noble strain,[28] of approved valour, and confirm'd honesty. I will teach you how to humour your cousin, that she shall fall in love with Benedick; — and I, with your two helps, will so practise on Benedick, that, in despite of his quick wit and his queasy stomach, he shall fall in love with Beatrice. If we can do this, Cupid is no longer an archer: his glory shall be ours, for we are the only love-gods. Go in with me, and I will tell you my drift. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *The Same. Another Room in* LEONATO'S *House.*

Enter Don JOHN *and* BORACHIO.

John. It is so; the Count Claudio shall marry the daughter of Leonato.

Bora. Yea, my lord; but I can cross it.

John. Any bar, any cross, any impediment will be medicinable to me: I am sick in displeasure to him; and whatsoever comes athwart his affection ranges evenly with mine. How canst thou cross this marriage?

Bora. Not honestly, my lord; but so covertly that no dishonesty shall appear in me.

John. Show me briefly how.

Bora. I think I told your lordship, a year since, how much I am in the favour of Margaret, the waiting-gentlewoman to Hero.

John. I remember.

Bora. I can, at any unseasonable instant of the night, appoint her to look out at her lady's chamber-window.

John. What life is in that, to be the death of this marriage?

Bora. The poison of that lies in you to temper. Go you to the Prince your brother; spare not to tell him that he

[28] *Strain*, sometimes spelt *strene*. means *stock*, *lineage*, *descent*, from the Anglo-Saxon *strind*. See vol. i. page 499, note 8

hath wronged his honour in marrying the renowned Claudio (whose estimation do you mightily hold up) to a contaminated stale, such a one as Hero.

John. What proof shall I make of that?

Bora. Proof enough to misuse the Prince, to vex Claudio, to undo Hero, and kill Leonato. Look you for any other issue?

John. Only to despite them, I will endeavour any thing.

Bora. Go, then; find me a meet hour to draw Don Pedro and the Count Claudio alone: tell them that you know that Hero loves me; intend[1] a kind of zeal both to the Prince and Claudio, as,—in love of your brother's honour, who hath made this match, and his friend's reputation, who is thus like to be cozen'd with the semblance of a maid,—that you have discover'd thus. They will scarcely believe this without trial: offer them instances; which shall bear no less likelihood than to see me at her chamber-window; hear me call Margaret Hero; hear Margaret term me Claudio;[2] and bring them to see this the very night before the intended wedding; for in the mean time I will so fashion the matter that Hero shall be absent; and there shall appear such seeming truth of her disloyalty, that jealousy shall be call'd assurance, and all the preparation overthrown.

John. Grow this to what adverse issue it can, I will put it in practice. Be cunning in the working this, and thy fee is a thousand ducats.

Bora. Be you constant in the accusation, and my cunning shall not shame me.

John. I will presently go learn their day of marriage.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. *The Same.* LEONATO'S *Garden.*

Enter BENEDICK *and a Boy.*

Bene. Boy,—

Boy. Signior?

Bene. In my chamber-window lies a book; bring it hither to me in the orchard.

Boy. I am here already, sir.

[1] *Intend* here is *pretend.* In Shakespeare's time the two words were used interchangeably: that is, either for the other. See vol. ii. page 323, note 2.

[2] So in all the old copies. Theobald thought it should read *Borachio* instead of Claudio; whereas the expression, *term me*, infers that a false name is to be agreed upon between the speaker and Margaret. Both Claudio and the Prince might well be persuaded that Hero received a clandestine lover, whom she *called* Claudio, in order to deceive her attendants, should any be within hearing; and this they would of course deem an aggravation of her offence.

Bene. I know that; but I would have thee hence, and here again. [*Exit Boy.*] — I do much wonder that one man, seeing how much another man is a fool when he dedicates his behaviours to love, will, after he hath laugh'd at such shallow follies in others, become the argument of his own scorn by falling in love: and such a man is Claudio. I have known when there was no music with him but the drum and the fife; and now had he rather hear the tabor and the pipe: I have known when he would have walk'd ten mile a-foot to see a good armour; and now will he lie ten nights awake, carving the fashion of a new doublet. He was wont to speak plain and to the purpose, like an honest man and a soldier; and now is he turn'd orthographer; his words are a very fantastical banquet, — just so many strange dishes. May I be so converted, and see with these eyes? I cannot tell; I think not: I will not be sworn but love may transform me to an oyster; but I'll take my oath on it, till he have made an oyster of me, he shall never make me such a fool. One woman is fair, — yet I am well; another is wise, — yet I am well; another virtuous, — yet I am well: but till all graces be in one woman, one woman shall not come in my grace. Rich she shall be, that's certain; wise, or I'll none; virtuous, or I'll never cheapen her;[1] fair, or I'll never look on her; mild, or come not near me; noble, or not I for an angel; of good discourse, an excellent musician, and her hair shall be of what colour it please God.[2] Ha, the Prince and monsieur Love! I will hide me in the arbour. [*Withdraws.*

Enter Don PEDRO, LEONATO, *and* CLAUDIO, *followed by* BALTHAZAR *and Musicians.*

D. Pedro. Come, shall we hear this music?
Claud. Yea, my good lord. — How still the evening is,
As hush'd on purpose to grace harmony!
D. Pedro. See you where Benedick hath hid himself?
Claud. O, very well, my lord: the music ended,
We'll fit the hid fox with a penny-worth.
D. Pedro. Come, Balthazar, we'll hear that song again.
Balth. O, good my lord, tax not so bad a voice
To slander music any more than once.
D. Pedro. It is the witness still of excellency

[1] To *cheapen* is, in old language, to *bargain for* or *purchase*. See vol. i. page 306, note 6.

[2] Disguises of false hair and of dyed hair were quite common, especially among the ladies, in Shakespeare's time; scarce any of them being so richly dowered with other gifts as to be content with the hair which it had pleased Nature to bestow. The Poet has several passages going to show that this custom was not much in favor with him.

To put a strange face on his own perfection: —
I pray thee, sing, and let me woo no more.

Balth. Because you talk of wooing, I will sing;
Since many a wooer doth commence his suit
To her he thinks not worthy; yet he wooes,
Yet will he swear he loves.

D. Pedro. Nay, pray thee, come;
Or, if thou wilt hold longer argument,
Do it in notes.

Balth. Note this before my notes, —
There's not a note of mine that's worth the noting.

D. Pedro. Why, these are very crotchets that he speaks;
Note notes, forsooth, and nothing! [*Music.*

Bene. [*Aside.*] Now, *Divine air!* now is his soul ravished! — Is it not strange, that [catgut] should hale souls out of men's bodies? [8] — Well, a horn for my money, when all's done.

BALTHAZAR *sings.*

Sigh no more, ladies, sigh no more,
Men were deceivers ever;
One foot in sea, and one on shore;
To one thing constant never:
Then sigh not so,
But let them go,
And be you blithe and bonny;
Converting all your sounds of woe
Into Hey nonny, nonny.

Sing no more ditties, sing no more,
Of dumps so dull and heavy;
The frauds of men were ever so,
Since Summer first was leavy:
Then sigh not so, &c.

D. Pedro. By my troth, a good song.

Balth. And an ill singer, my lord.

D. Pedro. Ha, no, no, faith; thou singest well enough for a shift.

Bene. [*Aside.*] An he had been a dog that should have howl'd thus, they would have hang'd him: and I pray God his bad voice bode no mischief! I had as lief have heard the night-raven,[4] come what plague could have come after it.

[8] A similar tribute to the power of music occurs in *Twelfth Night*, ii. 3; only it is there spoken of as able to "draw three souls out of one weaver."

[4] That is, the owl. So in 3 *Henry VI.*: "The *night-crow* cried, aboding luckless time." Thus also Milton, in *L'Allegro*: "And the *night-raven* sings."

D. Pedro. Yea, marry, dost thou hear, Balthazar? I pray thee, get us some excellent music; for to-morrow night we would have it at the Lady Hero's chamber-window.

Balth. The best I can, my lord.

D. Pedro. Do so: farewell. [*Exeunt* BALTHAZAR *and Musicians.*] — Come hither, Leonato: What was it you told me of to-day? — that your niece Beatrice was in love with Signior Benedick?

Claud. [*Aside to Pedro.*] O, ay: — Stalk on, stalk on;[5] the fowl sits. — [*Aloud.*] I did never think that lady would have loved any man.

Leon. No, nor I neither; but most wonderful that she should so dote on Signior Benedick, whom she hath in all outward behaviours seemed ever to abhor.

Bene. [*Aside.*] Is't possible? Sits the wind in that corner?

Leon. By my troth, my lord, I cannot tell what to think of it: but that she loves him with an enraged affection, — it is past the infinite of thought.

D. Pedro. May be she doth but counterfeit.

Claud. 'Faith, like enough.

Leon. O God, counterfeit! There was never counterfeit of passion came so near the life of passion as she discovers it.

D. Pedro. Why, what effects of passion shows she?

Claud. [*Aside.*] Bait the hook well; this fish will bite.

Leon. What effects, my lord! She will sit you, — you heard my daughter tell you how.

Claud. She did, indeed.

D. Pedro. How, how, I pray you? You amaze me: I would have thought her spirit had been invincible against all assaults of affection.

Leon. I would have sworn it had, my lord; especially against Benedick.

Bene. [*Aside.*] I should think this a gull, but that the white-bearded fellow speaks it: knavery cannot, sure, hide himself in such reverence.

Claud. [*Aside.*] He hath ta'en the infection: hold it up.

D. Pedro. Hath she made her affection known to Benedick?

Leon. No; and swears she never will: that's her torment.

Claud. 'Tis true, indeed; so your daughter says: *Shall I,*

[5] An allusion to the *stalking-horse*, whereby the fowler anciently screened himself from the sight of the game. It is thus described in John Gee's *New Snares of the Old Snare:* "Methinks I behold the cunning fowler, such as I have known in the fen-countries and elsewhere, that do shoot at woodcocks, snipes, and wild-fowl, by sneaking behind a painted cloth which they carry before them, having pictured on it the shape of a horse; which while the silly fowl gazeth on, it is knocked down with hail-shot, and so put into the fowler's budget."

says she, *that have so oft encounter'd him with scorn, write to him that I love him?*

Leon. This says she now when she is beginning to write to him; for she'll be up twenty times a night; and there will she sit till she have writ a sheet of paper:—My daughter tells us all.

Claud. Now you talk of a sheet of paper, I remember a pretty jest your daughter told us of.

Leon. O,—when she had writ it, and was reading it over, she found Benedick and Beatrice between the sheet?—

Claud. That.

Leon. O, she tore the letter into a thousand half-pence;[6] rail'd at herself, that she should be so immodest to write to one that she knew would flout her: *I measure him*, says she, *by my own spirit; for I should flout him, if he writ to me; yea, though I love him, I should.*

Claud. Then down upon her knees she falls, weeps, sobs, beats her heart, tears her hair, prays, cries,[7] *O sweet Benedick! God give me patience!*

Leon. She doth indeed; my daughter says so: and the ecstasy hath so much overborne her, that my daughter is sometime afraid she will do a desperate outrage to herself: it is very true.

D. Pedro. It were good that Benedick knew of it by some other, if she will not discover it.

Claud. To what end? He would but make a sport of it, and torment the poor lady worse.

D. Pedro. An he should, it were an alms-deed to hang him. She's an excellent-sweet lady; and, out of all suspicion, she is virtuous.

Claud. And she is exceeding wise.

D. Pedro. In every thing but in loving Benedick.

Leon. O, my lord, wisdom and blood combating in so tender a body, we have ten proofs to one that blood hath the victory. I am sorry for her, as I have just cause, being her uncle and her guardian.

D. Pedro. I would she had bestowed this dotage on me: I would have daff'd[8] all other respects, and made her half myself. I pray you, tell Benedick of it, and hear what he will say.

Leon. Were it good, think you?

[6] It should be remembered that the *silver* halfpence, then current, were very minute pieces.

[7] The old copies have *curses* here instead of *cries*. It is not easy to see what *curses* has to do there, while *cries* just fills the sense. The change is from Collier's second folio. The same of *deed* in *alms-deed*, a little below.

[8] To *daff* is the same as to *do off*, to *doff*, to put aside.

Claud. Hero thinks surely she will die; for she says she will die if he love her not; and she will die ere she make her love known; and she will die if he woo her, rather than she will 'bate one breath of her accustomed crossness.

D. Pedro. She doth well: if she should make tender of her love, 'tis very possible he'll scorn it; for the man, as you know all, hath a contemptible spirit.[9]

Claud. He is a very proper man.[10]

D. Pedro. He hath indeed a good outward happiness.

Claud. 'Fore God, and, in my mind, very wise.

D. Pedro. He doth indeed show some sparks that are like wit.

Leon. And I take him to be valiant.

D. Pedro. As Hector, I assure you: and in the managing of quarrels you may say he is wise; for either he avoids them with great discretion, or undertakes them with a most Christian-like fear.

Leon. If he do fear God, he must necessarily keep the peace: if he break the peace, he ought to enter into a quarrel with fear and trembling.

D. Pedro. And so will he do; for the man doth fear God, howsoever it seems not in him by some large jests he will make. Well, I am sorry for your niece. Shall we go seek Benedick, and tell him of her love?

Claud. Never tell him, my lord: let her wear it out with good counsel.

Leon. Nay, that's impossible: she may wear her heart out first.

D. Pedro. Well, we will hear further of it by your daughter: let it cool the while. I love Benedick well; and I could wish he would modestly examine himself, to see how much he is unworthy to have so good a lady.

Leon. My lord, will you walk? dinner is ready.

Claud. [*Aside.*] If he do not dote on her upon this, I will never trust my expectation.

D. Pedro. [*Aside.*] Let there be the same net spread for her; and that must your daughter and her gentlewomen carry. The sport will be, when they hold one an opinion of another's dotage, and no such matter: that's the scene that I would see, which will be merely a dumb-show. Let us send her to call him in to dinner.

[*Exeunt Don* PEDRO, CLAUDIO, *and* LEONATO.

[9] *Contemptible* for *contemptuous:* another instance of the undifferentiated use of the active and passive forms so common in Shakespeare's time. See vol. i. page 47, note 4, and page 55, note 2. Also page 8, note 3, of this volume.

[10] *Proper* is *handsome;* often so used See vol. i. page 432, note 6.

Bene. [*Advancing from the arbour.*] This can be no trick: the conference was sadly borne.[11] They have the truth of this from Hero. They seem to pity the lady: it seems her affections have their full bent. Love me! why, it must be requited. I hear how I am censur'd: they say I will bear myself proudly, if I perceive the love come from her; they say too that she will rather die than give any sign of affection. — I did never think to marry: — I must not seem proud: — happy are they that hear their detractions, and can put them to mending. They say the lady is fair, — 'tis a truth, I can bear them witness; and virtuous, — 'tis so, I cannot reprove it; and wise, but for loving me, — by my troth, it is no addition to her wit,[12] — nor no great argument of her folly, for I will be horribly in love with her. I may chance have some odd quirks and remnants of wit broken on me, because I have rail'd so long against marriage: — but doth not the appetite alter? A man loves the meat in his youth that he cannot endure in his age. Shall quips and sentences, and these paper-bullets of the brain, awe a man from the career of his humour? No; the world must be peopled. When I said I would die a bachelor, I did not think I should live till I were married. — Here comes Beatrice. By this day, she's a fair lady: I do spy some marks of love in her.

Enter BEATRICE.

Beat. Against my will I am sent to bid you come in to dinner.

Bene. Fair Beatrice, I thank you for your pains.

Beat. I took no more pains for those thanks than you take pains to thank me: if it had been painful, I would not have come.

Bene. You take pleasure, then, in the message?

Beat. Yea, just so much as you may take upon a knife's point, and not choke[13] a daw withal. — You have no stomach, signior? fare you well. [*Exit.*

Bene. Ha! *Against my will I am sent to bid you come in to dinner;* — there's a double meaning in that. *I took no more pains for those thanks than you took pains to thank me;* — that's as much as to say, Any pains that I take for

[11] Here again, as before, *sadly* is *seriously*, or *in earnest*. See page 80, note 11.

[12] A good instance of *wisdom* and *wit* used synonymously. So too, a little before, when Claudio says Benedick is "very *wise*," and Don Pedro replies, "He doth indeed show some sparks that are like *wit*."

[13] The old copies read "and choke a daw;" which does not seem right. The insertion of *not* is from Collier's second folio. Still I am not quite sure it ought to be admitted.

you is as easy as thanks. — If I do not take pity of her, I am a villain; if I do not love her, I am a Jew. I will go get her picture. [*Exit.*

ACT III. SCENE I. *Messina.* LEONATO'S *Garden.*

Enter HERO, MARGARET, *and* URSULA.

Hero. Good Margaret, run thee into the parlour;
There shalt thou find my cousin Beatrice
Proposing[1] with the Prince and Claudio:
Whisper her ear, and tell her, I and Ursula
Walk in the orchard, and our whole discourse
Is all of her; say that thou overheard'st us;
And bid her steal into the pleached bower,
Where honeysuckles, ripen'd by the Sun,
Forbid the Sun to enter; — like to favourites,
Made proud by princes, that advance their pride
Against that power that bred it: — there will she hide her,
To listen our propose. This is thy office:
Bear thee well in it, and leave us alone.

Marg. I'll make her come, I warrant you, presently. [*Exit.*

Hero. Now, Ursula, when Beatrice doth come,
As we do trace this alley up and down,
Our talk must only be of Benedick.
When I do name him, let it be thy part
To praise him more than ever man did merit:
My talk to thee must be, how Benedick
Is sick in love with Beatrice. Of this matter
Is little Cupid's crafty arrow made,
That only wounds by hearsay. Now begin;

Enter BEATRICE, *behind.*

For look where Beatrice, like a lapwing, runs
Close by the ground, to hear our conference.

Urs. The pleasant'st angling is to see the fish
Cut with their golden oars the silver stream,
And greedily devour the treacherous bait:
So angle we for Beatrice; who even now
Is couched in the woodbine coverture.
Fear you not my part of the dialogue.

Hero. Then go we near her, that her ear lose nothing
Of the false-sweet bait that we lay for it. —
[*They advance to the bower.*

[1] This is from the French *propos*, signifying talk, conversation. A few lines below we have the noun, "to listen our *propose*," bearing the same sense.

No, truly, Ursula, she's too disdainful;
I know her spirits are as coy and wild
As haggards of the rock.[2]
Urs. But are you sure
That Benedick loves Beatrice so entirely?
Hero. So says the Prince and my new-trothed lord.
Urs. And did they bid you tell her of it, madam?
Hero. They did entreat me to acquaint her of it;
But I persuaded them, if they lov'd Benedick,
To wish him wrestle with affection,
And never to let Beatrice know of it.
Urs. Why did you so? Doth not the gentleman
Deserve as full, as fortunate a bed,
As ever Beatrice shall couch upon?
Hero. O god of love! I know he doth deserve
As much as may be yielded to a man:
But Nature never fram'd a woman's heart
Of prouder stuff than that of Beatrice;
Disdain and scorn ride sparkling in her eyes,
Misprising what they look on; and her wit
Values itself so highly, that to her
All matter else seems weak: she cannot love,
Nor take no shape nor project of affection,
She is so self-endeared.
Urs. Sure, I think so;
And therefore certainly it were not good
She knew his love, lest she make sport at it.
Hero. Why, you speak truth: I never yet saw man,
How wise, how noble, young, how rarely-featur'd,
But she would spell him backward:[3] if fair-fac'd,
She'd swear the gentleman should be her sister;
If black, why, Nature, drawing of an antic,
Made a foul blot;[4] if tall, a lance ill-headed;
If low, an agate very vilely cut;[5]
If speaking, why, a vane blown with all winds;
If silent, why, a block moved with none.
So turns she every man the wrong side out;

[2] The haggard is a wild hawk. Latham, in his *Book of Falconry*, says, "Such is the greatness of her spirit, *she will not admit of any society* until such a time as nature worketh." See vol. i. page 211, note 10.

[3] That is, *misinterpret* him. An allusion to the practice of witches in uttering prayers. In like sort, we often say of a man who refuses to take things in their plain natural meaning, as if he were on the lookout for some cheat, "He reads every thing backwards."

[4] A *black* man here means a man with a dark or thick beard, which is the *blot* in nature's drawing. The *antic* was the fool or buffoon of the old farces.

[5] An *agate* is often used metaphorically for a very diminutive person, in allusion to the figures cut in agate for rings. Queen Mab is described "in shape no bigger than an *agate stone* on the forefinger of an alderman."

And never gives to truth and virtue that
Which simpleness and merit purchaseth.
Urs. Sure, sure, such carping is not commendáble.
Hero. No; nor to be so odd, and from all fashions,
As Beatrice is, cannot be commendáble:
But who dare tell her so? If I should speak,
She'd mock me into air; O, she would laugh me
Out of myself, press me to death with wit![6]
Therefore let Benedick, like cover'd fire,
Consume away in sighs, waste inwardly:
It were a better death than die with mocks;
Which is as bad as die with tickling.[7]
Urs. Yet tell her of it: hear what she will say.
Hero. No; rather I will go to Benedick,
And counsel him to fight against his passion.
And, truly, I'll devise some honest slanders
To stain my cousin with: one doth not know
How much an ill word may empoison liking.
Urs. O, do not do your cousin such a wrong!
She cannot be so much without true judgment
(Having so swift and excellent a wit
As she is priz'd to have) as to refuse
So rare a gentleman as Signior Benedick.
Hero. He is the only man of Italy,
Always excepted my dear Claudio.
Urs. I pray you, be not angry with me, madam,
Speaking my fancy: Signior Benedick,
For shape, for bearing, argument,[8] and valour,
Goes foremost in report through Italy.
Hero. Indeed, he hath an excellent-good name.
Urs. His excellence did earn it, ere he had it.—
When are you married, madam?
Hero. Why, every day to-morrow.[9] Come, go in:
I'll show thee some attires; and have thy counsel,
Which is the best to furnish me to-morrow.
Urs. [*Aside.*] She's lim'd,[10] I warrant you: we've caught her, madam.

[6] The allusion is to an ancient punishment inflicted on those who refused to plead to an indictment If they continued silent, they were pressed to death by heavy weights laid on their stomach.

[7] This word is intended to be pronounced as a trisyllable; it was sometimes written *tickeling*.

[8] *Argument*, here, seems to mean gifts of speech or conversation. I do not remember another instance of the word so used.

[9] Such is the most approved way of printing this passage; the explanation being that Hero plays upon the form of the question, meaning that she is a married woman to-morrow, and every day after that. The arrangement and explanation are Staunton's.

[10] Ensnared and entangled, as a sparrow with bird-lime. See vol. i. page 586, note 5.

Hero. [*Aside.*] If it prove so, then loving goes by haps:
Some Cupid kills with arrows, some with traps.
[*Exeunt* HERO *and* URSULA.

Beat. [*Advancing.*] What fire is in mine ears?[11] Can this be true?
Stand I condemn'd for pride and scorn so much?
Contempt, farewell! and maiden pride, adieu!
No glory lives behind the back of such.
And, Benedick, love on; I will requite thee,
Taming my wild heart to thy loving hand.[12]
If thou dost love, my kindness shall incite thee
To bind our loves up in a holy band;
For others say thou dost deserve, and I
Believe it better than reportingly. [*Exit.*

SCENE II. *The Same. A Room in* LEONATO'S *House.*

Enter Don PEDRO, CLAUDIO, BENEDICK, *and* LEONATO.

D. Pedro. I do but stay till your marriage be consummate, and then go I toward Arragon.

Claud. I'll bring you thither, my lord, if you'll vouchsafe me.

D. Pedro. Nay, that would be as great a soil in the new gloss of your marriage, as to show a child his new coat, and forbid him to wear it. I will only be bold with Benedick for his company; for, from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot, he is all mirth: he hath twice or thrice cut Cupid's bow-string, and the little hangman[1] dare not shoot at him: he hath a heart as sound as a bell, and his tongue is the clapper; for what his heart thinks, his tongue speaks.

Bene. Gallants, I am not as I have been.

Leon. So say I: methinks you are sadder.

Claud. I hope he be in love.

D. Pedro. Hang him, truant! there's no true drop of blood in him, to be truly touch'd with love: if he be sad, he wants money.

Bene. I have the tooth-ache.[2]

[11] Alluding to the proverbial saying, which is as old as Pliny's time, "That when our *ears do glow and tingle*, some there be that in our absence do talke of us."

[12] This image is taken from falconry. She has been charged with being as wild as *haggards of the rock;* she therefore says, that wild as her heart is, she will *tame* it *to the hand.*

[1] That is, *executioner*, slayer of hearts.

[2] So, in *The False One*, by Fletcher:

"O, this sounds mangily,
Poorly, and scurvily, in a soldier's mouth:
You had best be troubled with the *tooth-ache* too,
For lovers ever are."

D. Pedro. Draw it.

Bene. Hang it!

Claud. You must hang it first, and draw it afterwards.[3]

D. Pedro. What! sigh for the tooth-ache?

Leon. Where is but a humour or a worm?[4]

Bene. Well, every one can master a grief but he that has it.

Claud. Yet say I he is in love.

D. Pedro. There is no appearance of fancy[5] in him, unless it be a fancy that he hath to strange disguises; as, to be a Dutchman to-day, a Frenchman to-morrow; or in the shape of two countries at once, as, a German from the waist downward, all slops,[6] and a Spaniard from the hip upward, no doublet. Unless he have a fancy to this foolery, as it appears he hath, he is no fool for fancy, as you would have it appear he is.

Claud. If he be not in love with some woman, there is no believing old signs. He brushes his hat o' mornings: what should that bode?

D. Pedro. Hath any man seen him at the barber's?

Claud. No, but the barber's man hath been seen with him; and the old ornament of his cheek hath already stuff'd tennis-balls.

Leon. Indeed, he looks younger than he did, by the loss of a beard.

D. Pedro. Nay, he rubs himself with civet:[7] can you smell him out by that?

Claud. That's as much as to say, the sweet youth's in love.

D. Pedro. The greatest note of it is his melancholy.

Claud. And when was he wont to wash his face?

D. Pedro. Yea, or to paint himself? for the which, I hear what they say of him.

Claud. Nay, but his jesting spirit; which is now crept into a lute-string,[8] and new-govern'd by stops.

D. Pedro. Indeed, that tells a heavy tale for him: Conclude, conclude, he is in love.

[3] Alluding, apparently, to the old custom of *drawing* and quartering criminals after *hanging* them.

[4] The ulcer at the root of a diseased tooth was thought to be a *worm*, which it sometimes resembles.

[5] A play upon the word *fancy*, which Shakespeare uses for *love*, as well as for *humour*, *caprice*, or *affectation*.

[6] Large, loose breeches or trousers. Hence a *slop*-seller for one who furnishes seamen, &c., with clothes. Our word *slop-shop* is no doubt a relic of the same usage.

[7] *Civet* is the old name of the perfume, musk, derived from an animal called *civet-cat*. So, in *As You Like It*, Touchstone calls perfume "the flux of a cat."

[8] *Love-songs*, in Shakespeare's time, were sung to the lute. So in 1 *Henry IV.*: "As melancholy as an old lion, or a *lover's lute*." — The *stops* of a lute or guitar are the ridges across the finger-board where the strings are pressed down. Hamlet calls them *frets*. There is a quibble on *stops*.

Claud. Nay, but I know who loves him.

D. Pedro. That would I know too: I warrant, one that knows him not.

Claud. Yes, and his ill conditions;[9] and, in despite of all, dies for him.

D. Pedro. She shall be buried with her face upwards.

Bene. Yet is this no charm for the tooth-ache. — Old signior, walk aside with me: I have studied eight or nine wise words to speak to you, which these hobby-horses must not hear.[10] [*Exeunt* BENEDICK *and* LEONATO.

D. Pedro. For my life, to break with him about Beatrice.

Claud. 'Tis even so. Hero and Margaret have by this played their parts with Beatrice; and then the two bears will not bite one another when they meet.

Enter Don JOHN.

John. My lord and brother, God save you!

D. Pedro. Good den,[11] brother.

John. If your leisure serv'd, I would speak with you.

D. Pedro. In private?

John. If it please you: yet Count Claudio may hear; for what I would speak of concerns him.

D. Pedro. What's the matter?

John. [*To* CLAUDIO.] Means your lordship to be married to-morrow?

D. Pedro. You know he does.

John. I know not that, when he knows what I know.

Claud. If there be any impediment, I pray you discover it.

John. You may think I love you not: let that appear hereafter, and aim[12] better at me by that I now will manifest. For my brother, I think he holds you well; and in dearness of heart hath holp[13] to effect your ensuing marriage, — surely suit ill spent and labour ill bestowed!

D. Pedro. Why, what's the matter?

John. I came hither to tell you; and, circumstances shorten'd, (for she hath been too long a-talking of,) the lady is disloyal.

Claud. Who, Hero?

John. Even she; Leonato's Hero, your Hero, every man's Hero.

Claud. Disloyal!

[9] *Condition* was continually used for *temper* or *disposition*. See vol. i. page 457, note 34.

[10] *Hobby-horse* was sometimes used for a *silly fellow*.

[11] A colloquial abridgment of *good even*: also used for *good day*.

[12] To *aim* is to *guess*: often so used. See vol. i. page 439, note 24.

[13] *Holp* or *holpen* is the old preterite of *help*; occurring often in the *Psalter*.

John. The word is too good to paint out her wickedness; I could say she were worse: think you of a worse title, and I will fit her to it. Wonder not till further warrant: go but with me to-night, you shall see her chamber-window enter'd, even the night before her wedding-day: if you love her then, to-morrow wed her; but it would better fit your honour to change your mind.

Claud. May this be so?

D. Pedro. I will not think it.

John. If you dare not trust that you see, confess not that you know. If you will follow me, I will show you enough; and when you have seen more, and heard more, proceed accordingly.

Claud. If I see any thing to-night why I should not marry her to-morrow, in the congregation where I should wed, there will I shame her.

D. Pedro. And, as I wooed for thee to obtain her, I will join with thee to disgrace her.

John. I will disparage her no further till you are my witnesses: bear it coldly but till midnight, and let the issue show itself.

D. Pedro. O day untowardly turned!

Claud. O mischief strangely thwarting!

John. O plague right well prevented!
So will you say when you have seen the sequel. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. *The Same. A Street.*

Enter DOGBERRY *and* VERGES,[1] *with Watchmen.*

Dogb. Are you good men and true?

Verg. Yea, or else it were pity but they should suffer salvation, body and soul.

Dogb. Nay, that were a punishment too good for them, if they should have any allegiance in them, being chosen for the Prince's watch.

Verg. Well, give them their charge, neighbour Dogberry.

Dogb. First, who think you the most desartless man to be constable?

1 *Watch.* Hugh Oatcake, sir, or George Seacoal; for they can write and read.

Dogb. Come hither, neighbour Seacoal. God hath bless'd you with a good name: to be a well-favoured man is the gift of fortune; but to write and read comes by nature.

[1] The first of these worthies is named from the *dog-berry*, or female cornel a shrub that grows in every county in England. *Verges* is only the provincial pronunciation of *verjuice*.

2 *Watch.* Both which, master constable, —

Dogb. You have: I knew it would be your answer. Well, for your favour, sir, why, give God thanks, and make no boast of it; and for your writing and reading, let that appear when there is no need of such vanity. You are thought here to be the most senseless and fit man for the constable of the watch; therefore bear you the lantern. This is your charge: You shall comprehend all vagrom men; you are to bid any man stand, in the Prince's name.

2 *Watch.* How if 'a will not stand?

Dogb. Why, then, take no note of him, but let him go; and presently call the rest of the watch together, and thank God you are rid of a knave.

Verg. If he will not stand when he is bidden, he is none of the Prince's subjects.

Dogb. True, and they are to meddle with none but the Prince's subjects. — You shall also make no noise in the streets; for, for the watch to babble and talk is most tolerable and not to be endured.

2 *Watch.* We will rather sleep than talk: we know what belongs to a watch.

Dogb. Why, you speak like an ancient and most quiet watchman; for I cannot see how sleeping should offend: only, have a care that your bills [2] be not stolen. — Well, you are to call at all the alehouses, and bid them that are drunk get them to bed.

2 *Watch.* How if they will not?

Dogb. Why, then, let them alone till they are sober: if they make you not then the better answer, you may say they are not the men you took them for.

2 *Watch.* Well, sir.

Dogb. If you meet a thief, you may suspect him, by virtue of your office, to be no true man; [3] and, for such kind of men, the less you meddle or make with them, why, the more is for your honesty.

2 *Watch.* If we know him to be a thief, shall we not lay hands on him?

Dogb. Truly, by your office, you may; but I think they that touch pitch will be defil'd: the most peaceable way for you, if you do take a thief, is to let him show himself what he is, and steal out of your company.

Verg. You have been always call'd a merciful man, partner.

Dogb. Truly, I would not hang a dog by my will; much more a man who hath any honesty in him.

[2] A sort of halberd, or hatchet with a hooked point, used by watchmen.

[3] A *true* man is an *honest* man; the humour of the passage turns partly upon that sense of *true*.

Verg. If you hear a child cry in the night, you must call to the nurse, and bid her still it.

2 *Watch.* How if the nurse be asleep and will not hear us?

Dogb. Why, then, depart in peace, and let the child wake her with crying; for the ewe that will not hear her lamb when it baes will never answer a calf when he bleats.

Verg. 'Tis very true.

Dogb. This is the end of the charge: You, constable, are to present the Prince's own person: if you meet the Prince in the night, you may stay him.

Verg. Nay, by'r Lady, that, I think, 'a cannot.

Dogb. Five shillings to one on't, with any man that knows the statues, he may stay him: marry, not without the Prince be willing; for, indeed, the watch ought to offend no man; and it is an offence to stay a man against his will.

Verg. By'r Lady, I think it be so.

Dogb. Ha, ah-ha! Well, masters, good night: an there be any matter of weight chances, call up me: keep your fellows' counsels and your own; and good night. — Come, neighbour.

2 *Watch.* Well, masters, we hear our charge: let us go sit here upon the church-bench till two, and then all to bed.

Dogb. One word more, honest neighbours. I pray you, watch about Signior Leonato's door; for, the wedding being there to-morrow, there is a great coil[4] to-night. Adieu: be vigitant, I beseech you.

[*Exeunt* DOGBERRY *and* VERGES.

Enter BORACHIO *and* CONRADE.

Bora. What, Conrade!

Watch. [*Aside.*] Peace! stir not.

Bora. Conrade, I say! —

Con. Here, man; I am at thy elbow.

Bora. Mass,[5] and my elbow itch'd; I thought there would a scab follow.

Con. I will owe thee an answer for that: and now forward with thy tale.

Bora. Stand thee close, then, under this pent-house, for it drizzles rain; and I will, like a true drunkard, utter all to thee.[6]

[4] *Coil* is *bustle*, *tumult*, or *stir*. See vol. ii. page 18, note 30.

[5] "By the Mass" was a very common oath; *Mass* being the old name of the Lord's Supper.

[6] A rather curious note of Shakespeare's acquaintance with Italian. Borachio does not mean that he is himself either drunk or a drunkard; he merely refers to the significance of his own name, — a glutton or a wine-bibber. Thus in Florio's *Italian* Dictionary: "*Boraccia*, a boracho or bottle made of goat's skin, such as they use in Spain *Boracchiare*, to gluttonize." Of course there is an implied reference to the proverb, *in vino veritas*.

Watch. [*Aside.*] Some treason, masters: yet stand close.

Bora. Therefore know I have earned of Don John a thousand ducats.

Con. Is it possible that any villainy should be so dear?

Bora. Thou shouldst rather ask, if it were possible any villain should be so rich; for, when rich villains have need of poor ones, poor ones may make what price they will.

Con. I wonder at it.

Bora. That shows thou art unconfirm'd.[7] Thou knowest that the fashion of a doublet, or a hat, or a cloak, is nothing to a man.

Con. Yes, it is apparel.

Bora. I mean, the fashion.

Con. Yes, the fashion is the fashion.

Bora. Tush! I may as well say, the fool's the fool. But see'st thou not what a deformed thief this fashion is?

Watch. [*Aside.*] I know that Deformed; 'a has been a vile thief this seven year; 'a goes up and down like a gentleman: I remember his name.

Bora. Didst thou not hear somebody?

Con. No; 'twas the vane on the house.

Bora. See'st thou not, I say, what a deformed thief this fashion is? how giddily he turns about all the hot bloods between fourteen and five-and-thirty? sometime fashioning them like Pharaoh's soldiers in the reechy painting,[8] sometime like god Bel's priests in the old church-window, sometime like the shaven Hercules in the smirch'd[9] worm-eaten tapestry?

Con. All this I see; and I see that the fashion wears out more apparel than the man. But art not thou thyself giddy with the fashion too, that thou hast shifted out of thy tale into telling me of the fashion?

Bora. Not so neither: but know that I have to-night wooed Margaret, the Lady Hero's gentlewoman, by the name of Hero: she leans me out at her mistress' chamber-window, bids me a thousand times good night,—I tell this tale vilely:—I should first tell thee how the Prince, Claudio, and my master, planted and placed and possessed by my master Don John, saw afar off in the orchard this amiable encounter.

Con. And thought they Margaret was Hero?

Bora. Two of them did, the Prince and Claudio; but the Devil my master knew she was Margaret; and partly by his oaths, which first possess'd them, partly by the dark night,

[7] Unpractised in the ways of the world.

[8] *Reechy* is *discoloured with smoke*. *Reeking* is still used in a similar sense.

[9] *Smirch'd, sullied.* Probably only another form of *smutched*. The word is peculiar to Shakespeare.

which did deceive them, but chiefly by my villainy, which did confirm any slander that Don John had made, away went Claudio enraged; swore he would meet her, as he was appointed, next morning at the temple, and there, before the whole congregation, shame her with what he saw o'er-night, and send her home again without a husband.

1 *Watch.* We charge you, in the Prince's name, stand!

2 *Watch.* Call up the right master constable. We have here recovered the most dangerous piece of lechery that ever was known in the commonwealth.

1 *Watch.* And one Deformed is one of them: I know him; 'a wears a lock.[10]

Con. Masters, masters, —

2 *Watch.* You'll be made bring Deformed forth, I warrant you.

Con. Masters, —

1 *Watch.* Never speak: we charge you let us obey you to go with us.

Bora. We are like to prove a goodly commodity, being taken up of these men's bills.[11]

Con. A commodity in question,[12] I warrant you. — Come, we'll obey you. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV. *The Same. A Room in* LEONATO'S *House.*

Enter HERO, MARGARET, *and* URSULA.

Hero. Good Ursula, wake my cousin Beatrice, and desire her to rise.

Urs. I will, lady.

Hero. And bid her come hither.

Urs. Well. [*Exit.*

Marg. Troth, I think your other rabato[1] were better.

Hero. No, pray thee, good Meg, I'll wear this.

[10] A lock of hair, called "a love-lock," was often worn by the gay young gallants of Shakespeare's time. This ornament and invitation to love was cherished with great care by the owners, being brought before and tied with a riband. Prynne, the great Puritan hero, spit some of his bile against this fashion, in a book on *The Unloveliness of Love-locks.*

[11] We have the same conceit in 2 *Henry VI.*: "My lord, when shall we go to Cheapside, and *take up commodities* upon our *bills?*" The Poet has several like quibbles upon *bills.* See vol. i page 30, note 10.

[12] *Question* refers to the examination or trial that the speaker expects to undergo, now that he is caught.

[1] The *rabato* was a kind of ruff or collar for the neck, such as were much worn in the Poet's time, and are often seen in the portraits of Queen Elizabeth. Dekker calls them "your stiff-necked *rebatoes.*" The word is from the French *rebattre*, to beat back; and the thing is said to be so called because *put back* towards the shoulders. Shakespeare uses *rebate*, from the same source, and with a similar meaning.

Marg. By my troth, it's not so good; and I warrant your cousin will say so.

Hero. My cousin's a fool, and thou art another: I'll wear none but this.

Marg. I like the new tire[2] within excellently, if the hair were a thought browner; and your gown's a most rare fashion, i' faith. I saw the Duchess of Milan's gown that they praise so.

Hero. O, that exceeds, they say.

Marg. By my troth, it's but a night-gown in respect of yours, — cloth-o'-gold, and cuts, and lac'd with silver, set with pearls down sleeves,[3] side sleeves, and skirts round underborne with a bluish tinsel: but for a fine, quaint,[4] graceful, and excellent fashion, yours is worth ten on't.

Hero. God give me joy to wear it! for my heart is exceeding heavy.

Marg. 'Twill be heavier soon by the weight of a man.

Hero. Fie upon thee! art not asham'd?

Marg. Of what, lady? of speaking honourably? Is not marriage honourable in a beggar? Is not your lord honourable without marriage? I think you would have me say, saving your reverence, *a husband:* an bad thinking do not wrest true speaking, I'll offend nobody: Is there any harm in, *the heavier for a husband?* None, I think, an it be the right husband and the right wife; otherwise 'tis light, and not heavy: Ask my Lady Beatrice else; here she comes.

Enter BEATRICE.

Hero. Good morrow, coz.

Beat. Good morrow, sweet Hero.

Hero. Why, how now! do you speak in the sick tune?

Beat. I am out of all other tune, methinks.

Marg. Clap us into *Light o' love;* that goes without a burden: do you sing it, and I'll dance it.

Beat. Yea, *Light o' love,*[5] with your heels! — then, if your

[2] *Tire* is *head-dress.* So in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, iii. 3: "Thou hast the right arched beauty of the brow, that becomes the ship-*tire*, the *tire*-valiant, or any *tire* of Venetian admittance." — "A *thought* browner" is a *shade* browner.

[3] That is, with pearls set along down the sleeves. "*Side* sleeves" are long, full sleeves. *Side* is from the Anglo-Saxon *sid*, long, ample. Peele, in his *Old Wives' Tale*, has "*side* slops," for long trousers. Our word *side*, in its ordinary use, has reference to the *length* of the thing to which it is applied — "In *respect of* yours" is in *comparison with* yours — *Round* is equivalent to *roundabout.*

[4] *Quaint* is *ingenious* or *elegant;* probably from the Latin *comptus.* See page 25, note 2.

[5] The name of a popular old dance-tune mentioned again in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and in several of our old dramas.

husband have stables enough, you'll look he shall lack no barns.[6]

Marg. O illegitimate construction! I scorn that with my heels.

Beat. 'Tis almost five o'clock, cousin; 'tis time you were ready. By my troth I am exceeding ill: — heigh-ho!

Marg. For a hawk, a horse, or a husband?

Beat. For[7] the letter that begins them all, H.[8]

Marg. Well, an you be not turn'd Turk,[9] there's no more sailing by the star.

Beat. What means the fool, trow?[10]

Marg. Nothing I; but God send every one their heart's desire!

Hero. These gloves the count sent me; they are an excellent perfume.

Beat. I am stuff'd, cousin; I cannot smell.

Marg. A maid, and stuff'd! there's goodly catching of cold.

Beat. O, God help me! God help me! how long have you profess'd apprehension?

Marg. Ever since you left it: doth not my wit become me rarely?

Beat. It is not seen enough; you should wear it in your cap. — By my troth, I am sick.

Marg. Get you some of this distill'd *carduus benedictus*,[11] and lay it to your heart: it is the only thing for a qualm.

Hero. There thou prick'st her with a thistle.

Beat. Benedictus! why *benedictus*? you have some moral[12] in this *benedictus*.

[6] A quibble between *barns*, repositories for corn, and *bairns*, children, formerly pronounced *barns*. So in *The Winter's Tale:* "Mercy on us, a *barn!* a very pretty *barn!*"

[7] Here *for* has the sense of *because of;* but there is a quibble involved between that sense and the sense it bears in the preceding speech. *Because* and *because of* are both among the old senses of *for*, in frequent use. See vol. i. page 109, note 4.

[8] That is, for an *ache* or pain, pronounced like the letter *H*. See vol. ii. page 648, note 7.

[9] To *turn Turk* is an old phrase for proving treacherous or unfaithful. See vol. i. page 580, note 27.

[10] So in *The Merry Wives of Windsor:* "Who's there, *trow?*" In both places, the phrase is equivalent to *I wonder;* though it commonly meant *think*.

[11] *Carduus benedictus*, or the blessed thistle, was one of the ancient herbs medicinal, like those which in our day a much-experienced motherhood has often applied successfully to the "ills that flesh is heir to." Thus, in Cogan's *Haven of Health*, 1595: "This herb, for the singular virtue it hath, is worthily named *Benedictus*, or *Omnimorbia*, that is, a salve for every sore, not known to the physicians of old time, but lately revealed by the special providence of Almighty God."

[12] Some *hidden meaning*, like the *moral* of a fable. Thus, in the *Rape of Lucrece:* "Nor could she *moralize* his wanton sight." And in *The Taming of the Shrew:* "To expound the *meaning* or *moral* of his signs and tokens."

Marg. Moral! no, by my troth, I have no moral meaning; I meant, plain holy-thistle. You may think perchance that I think you are in love: nay, by'r Lady, I am not such a fool to think what I list; nor I list not to think what I can; nor, indeed, I cannot think, if I would think my heart out of thinking, that you are in love, or that you will be in love, or that you can be in love. Yet Benedick was such another, and now is he become a man: he swore he would never marry; and yet now, in despite of his heart, he eats his meat without grudging:[13] and how you may be converted, I know not; but methinks you look with your eyes as other women do.

Beat. What pace is this that thy tongue keeps?

Marg. Not a false gallop.

Re-enter URSULA.

Urs. Madam, withdraw: the Prince, the count, Signior Benedick, Don John, and all the gallants of the town, are come to fetch you to church.

Hero. Help to dress me, good coz, good Meg, good Ursula. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V. *The Same. Another Room in* LEONATO'S *House.*

Enter LEONATO, *with* DOGBERRY *and* VERGES.

Leon. What would you with me, honest neighbour?

Dogb. Marry, sir, I would have some confidence with you that decerns you nearly.

Leon. Brief, I pray you; for you see it is a busy time with me.

Dogb. Marry, this it is, sir,—

Verg. Yes, in truth it is, sir.

Leon. What is it, my good friends?

Dogb. Goodman Verges, sir, speaks a little off the matter: an old man, sir, and his wits are not so blunt, as, God help, I would desire they were; but, in faith, honest as the skin between his brows.

Verg. Yes, I thank God, I am as honest as any man living that is an old man and no honester than I.

Dogb. Comparisons are odorous: *palabras,*[1] neighbour Verges.

[13] That is, *feeds* on *love*, and likes his food.

[1] How this Spanish word came into our language is uncertain. It seems to have been current for a time, even among the vulgar, and was probably introduced by sailors, as well as the corrupted form, *palaver*. We have it again in the mouth of Sly the Tinker: "Therefore *pucas pallabris:* let the world slide, Sessa."

Leon. Neighbours, you are tedious.

Dogb. It pleases your Worship to say so, but we are the poor[2] Duke's officers; but truly, for mine own part, if I were as tedious as a king, I could find in my heart to bestow it all of[3] your Worship.

Leon. All thy tediousness on me, ha!

Dogb. Yea, an 'twere a thousand pound more than 'tis; for I hear as good exclamation on your Worship as of any man in the city; and, though I be but a poor man, I am glad to hear it.

Verg. And so am I.

Leon. I would fain know what you have to say

Verg. Marry, sir, our watch to-night, excepting your Worship's presence, have ta'en a couple of as arrant knaves as any in Messina.

Dogb. A good old man, sir; he will be talking: as they say, When the age is in, the wit is out. God help us! it is a world to see![4] — Well said, i' faith, neighbour Verges: — well, God's a good man; an two men ride of a horse, one must ride behind. — An honest soul, i' faith, sir; by my troth he is, as ever broke bread: but God is to be worshipp'd: All men are not alike, — alas, good neighbour!

Leon. Indeed, neighbour, he comes too short of you.

Dogb. Gifts that God gives.

Leon. I must leave you.

Dogb. One word, sir: Our watch, sir, have indeed comprehended two auspicious persons, and we would have them this morning examined before your Worship.

Leon. Take their examination yourself, and bring it me: I am now in great haste, as it may appear unto you.

Dogb. It shall be suffigance.

Leon. Drink some wine ere you go: fare you well.

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. My lord, they stay for you to give your daughter to her husband.

Leon. I'll wait upon them: I am ready.

[*Exeunt* LEONATO *and Messenger.*

Dogb. Go, good partner, go, get you to Francis Seacoal;

[2] This stroke of pleasantry, arising from the transposition of the epithet *poor*, occurs in *Measure for Measure*. Elbow says, "If it please your Honour, I am the *poor Duke's* constable."

[3] *Of* and *on* were used indifferently in such cases.

[4] This was a common apostrophe of admiration, equivalent to *it is wonderful*, or *it is admirable*. Baret in his *Alvearie*, 1580, explains "*It is a world to heare*" by "It is a thing worthie the hearing, *audire est operæ pretium*." In Cavendish's *Life of Wolsey* we have "Is it not *a world* to consider?"

bid him bring his pen and inkhorn to the jail: we are now to examine these men.[5]

Verg. And we must do it wisely.

Dogb. We will spare for no wit, I warrant you; here's that [*Touching his forehead.*] shall drive some of them to a *non-come:* only get the learned writer to set down our excommunication, and meet me at the jail. [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV. SCENE I. *Messina. The Inside of a Church.*

Enter Don PEDRO, *Don* JOHN, LEONATO, *Friar* FRANCIS, CLAUDIO, BENEDICK, HERO, BEATRICE, *&c.*

Leon. Come, Friar Francis, be brief; only to the plain form of marriage, and you shall recount their particular duties afterwards.

Friar. You come hither, my lord, to marry this lady?

Claud. No.

Leon. To be married to her:—friar, you come to marry her.

Friar. Lady, you come hither to be married to this count?

Hero. I do.

Friar. If either of you know any inward impediment why you should not be conjoined, I charge you, on your souls, to utter it.[1]

Claud. Know you any, Hero?

Hero. None, my lord.

Friar. Know you any, count?

Leon. I dare make his answer,—none.

Claud. O, what men dare do! what men may do! what men daily do, not knowing what they do!

Bene. How now! interjections? Why, then, some be of laughing, as, Ha, ha, he!

Claud. Stand thee by, friar.—Father, by your leave:
Will you with free and unconstrained soul
Give me this maid, your daughter?

Leon. As freely, son, as God did give her me.

Claud. And what have I to give you back, whose worth
May counterpoise this rich and precious gift?

D. Pedro. Nothing, unless you render her again.

[5] So the folio; the quarto reads "*examination* these men;" which is followed by most modern editors. But White remarks, with apparent justice, that "Dogberry mistakes the significance of words, but never errs in the forms of speech; and this putting of a substantive into his mouth for a verb is entirely at variance with his habit of thought, and confounds his cacology with that which is of quite another sort."

[1] This is borrowed from the marriage ceremony, which (with a few changes in phraseology) is the same as was used in Shakespeare's time.

Claud. Sweet Prince, you learn me noble thankfulness. —
There, Leonato, take her back again:
Give not this rotten orange to your friend;
She's but the sign and semblance of her honour. —
Behold how like a maid she blushes here!
O, what authority and show of truth
Can cunning sin cover itself withal!
Comes not that blood as modest evidence
To witness simple virtue? Would you not swear,
All you that see her, that she were a maid,
By these exterior shows? — But she is none:
Her blush is guiltiness, not modesty.
Leon. What do you mean, my lord?
Claud. Not to be married,
Not to knit my soul to an approved wanton.
Leon. Dear my lord, if you, in your own proof,
Have vanquish'd the resistance of her youth, —
Claud. I know what you would say. No, Leonato,
I never tempted her with word too large;
But, as a brother to his sister, show'd
Bashful sincerity and comely love.
Hero. And seem'd I ever otherwise to you?
Claud. Out on thy seeming! I will write against it:
You seem'd to me as Dian in her orb,
As chaste as is the bud ere it be blown;
But you are more intemperate in your blood
Than Venus.
Hero. Is my lord well, that he doth speak so wide?
Claud. Sweet Prince, why speak not you?
D. Pedro. What should I speak?
I stand dishonour'd, that have gone about
To link my dear friend to a common stale.
Leon. Are these things spoken? or do I but dream?
John. Sir, they are spoken, and these things are true.
Bene. This looks not like a nuptial.
Hero. True! — O God![2]
Claud. Leonato, stand I here?
Is this the Prince? is this the Prince's brother?
Is this face Hero's? are our eyes our own?
Leon. All this is so: but what of this, my lord?
Claud. Let me but move one question to your daughter;
And, by that fatherly and kindly power[3]
That you have in her, bid her answer truly.

[2] Hero's words are in reply to the speech of John. The passage is usually pointed thus: "True, O God!" as if it were in answer to Benedick.
[3] *Kind* was often used in Shakespeare's time for *nature*, *kindly* for *natural* or *naturally*. So that *kindly* power here means natural power. See

Leon. I charge thee do so, as thou art my child.
Hero. O, God defend me! how am I beset! —
What kind of catechizing call you this?
Claud. To make you answer truly to your name.
Hero. Is it not Hero? Who can blot that name
With any just reproach?
Claud. Marry, that can Hero:
Hero itself can blot out Hero's virtue.
What man was he talk'd with you yesternight
Out at your window betwixt twelve and one?
Now, if you are a maid, answer to this.
Hero. I talk'd with no man at that hour, my lord.
D. Pedro. Why, then are you no maiden. — Leonato,
I'm sorry you must hear: upon mine honour,
Myself, my brother, and this grieved count
Did see her, hear her, at that hour last night
Talk with a ruffian at her chamber-window;
Who hath indeed, most like a liberal villain,[4]
Confess'd the vile encounters they have had.
John. Fie, fie! they are not to be nam'd, my lord,
Not to be spoken of. — Thus, pretty lady,
I'm sorry for thy much misgovernment.
Claud. O Hero, what a Hero hadst thou been,
If half thy outward graces had been plac'd
About the thoughts and counsels of thy heart!
But, fare thee well, most foul, most fair! farewell,
Thou pure impiety and impious purity!
For thee I'll lock up all the gates of love,
And on my eyelids shall conjecture hang,
To turn all beauty into thoughts of harm,
And never shall it more be gracious.
Leon. Hath no man's dagger here a point for me?
[HERO *swoons.*
Beat. Why, how now, cousin! wherefore sink you down?
John. Come, let us go. These things, come thus to light,
Smother her spirits up.
[*Exeunt Don* PEDRO, *Don* JOHN, CLAUDIO, *and Attendants.*
Bene. How doth the lady?

vol. i. page 80, note 4, and vol. ii. page 407, note 4. So, too, in *The Faerie Queene:*

> "The earth shall sooner leave her *kindly* skill
> To bring forth fruit, and make eternall dearth,
> Than I leave you, my life, yborne of heavenly birth."

[4] *Liberal* here, as in many places of these plays, means *licentious, free beyond honour* or *decency.* This sense of the word is not peculiar to Shakespeare.

Beat. Dead, I think: — help, uncle! —
Hero! why, Hero! — Uncle! — Signior Benedick! — friar!
Leon. O Fate, take not away thy heavy hand!
Death is the fairest cover for her shame
That may be wish'd for.
Beat. How now, cousin Hero!
Friar. Have comfort, lady.
Leon. Dost thou look up?
Friar. Yea, wherefore should she not?
Leon. Wherefore! Why, doth not every earthly thing
Cry shame upon her? Could she here deny
The story that is printed in her blood?[5] —
Do not live, Hero; do not ope thine eyes:
For, did I think thou wouldst not quickly die,
Thought I thy spirits were stronger than thy shames,
Myself would, on the rearward of reproaches,
Strike at thy life. Griev'd I, I had but one?
Chid I for that at frugal Nature's frame?
O, one too much by thee! Why had I one?
Why ever wast thou lovely in my eyes?
Why had I not with charitable hand
Took up a beggar's issue at my gates,
Who smirched thus and mir'd with infamy,
I might have said, *No part of it is mine;*
This shame derives itself from unknown loins?
But mine, and mine I lov'd, and mine I prais'd,
And mine that I was proud on; mine so much
That I myself was to myself not mine,
Valuing of her; why, she — O, she is fall'n
Into a pit of ink, that the wide sea
Hath drops too few to wash her clean again,
And salt too little which may season give
To her foul-tainted flesh!
Bene. Sir, sir, be patient.
For my part, I am so attir'd in wonder,
I know not what to say.
Beat. O, on my soul, my cousin is belied!
Bene. Lady, were you her bedfellow last night?
Beat. No, truly, not; although, until last night,
I have this twelvemonth been her bedfellow.
Leon. Confirm'd, confirm'd! O, that is stronger made
Which was before barr'd up with ribs of iron!
Would the two Princes lie? and Claudio lie,
Who lov'd her so, that, speaking of her foulness,
Wash'd it with tears? Hence from her! let her die.

[5] The story which her *blushes* discovered to be true.

Friar. Hear me a little;
For I have only silent been so long,
And given way unto this course of fortune,
By noting of the lady: I have mark'd
A thousand blushing apparitions start
Into her face; a thousand innocent shames
In angel whiteness beat away those blushes;
And in her eye there hath appear'd a fire,
To burn the errors that these Princes hold
Against her maiden truth. Call me a fool;
Trust not my reading nor my observation,
Which with experimental seal doth warrant
The tenour of my books; trust not my age,
My reverend calling, nor divinity,
If this sweet lady lie not guiltless here
Under some blighting error.[6]

Leon. Friar, it cannot be.
Thou see'st that all the grace that she hath left
Is, that she will not add to her damnation
A sin of perjury; she not denies it:
Why seek'st thou, then, to cover with excuse
That which appears in proper nakedness?

Friar. Lady, what man is he you are accus'd of?

Hero. They know that do accuse me; I know none
If I know more of any man alive
Than that which maiden modesty doth warrant,
Let all my sins lack mercy! — O my father,
Prove you that any man with me convers'd
At hours unmeet, or that I yesternight
Maintain'd the change of words with any creature,
Refuse me, hate me, torture me to death!

Friar. There is some strange misprision in the Princes.

Bene. Two of them have the very bent of honour;
And if their wisdoms be misled in this,
The practice of it lies in John the bastard,
Whose spirits toil in frame of villainies.

Leon. I know not. If they speak but truth of her,
These hands shall tear her; if they wrong her honour,
The proudest of them shall well hear of it.
Time hath not yet so dried this blood of mine,
Nor age so eat up my invention,
Nor fortune made such havoc of my means,

[6] The old copies have *biting* instead of *blighting*. The change is from Collier's second folio. I am not certain that it should be admitted, though Dyce admits it. In the fourth line above, also, the old copies have *book* instead of *books*; which latter is proposed by Walker. Again, *reverence, calling*, is the old reading, instead of *reverend calling*, which is also from Collier's second folio.

Nor my bad life reft me so much of friends,
But they shall find, awak'd in such a cause,[7]
Both strength of limb and policy of mind,
Ability in means and choice of friends,
To quit me of them throughly.
Friar. Pause awhile,
And let my counsel sway you in this case.
Your daughter here the Princes left for dead:
Let her awhile be secretly kept in,
And publish it that she is dead indeed;
Maintain a mourning ostentation,[8]
And on your family's old monument
Hang mournful epitaphs, and do all rites
That appertain unto a burial.
Leon. What shall become[9] of this? What will this do?
Friar. Marry, this, well carried, shall on her behalf
Change slander to remorse;[10] — that is some good:
But not for that dream I on this strange course,
But on this travail look for greater birth.
She dying, as it must be so maintain'd,
Upon the instant that she was accus'd,
Shall be lamented, pitied, and excus'd
Of every hearer: for it so falls out,
That what we have we prize not to the worth
Whiles we enjoy it; but, being lack'd and lost,
Why, then we rack[11] the value, then we find
The virtue that possession would not show us
Whiles it was ours. So will it fare with Claudio:
When he shall hear she died upon his words,
Th' idea of her life shall sweetly creep
Into his study of imagination;
And every lovely organ of her life
Shall come apparell'd in more precious habit,
More moving-delicate and full of life,
Into the eye and prospect of his soul,
Than when she liv'd indeed; then shall he mourn,
(If ever love had interest in his liver,[12])

[7] Here, again, the old copies have *kind* instead of *cause*. *Kind* is without fitness in sense, and is further out of place, as making a rhyme with *mind* in the next line. *Cause* was proposed by Walker, and is found in Collier's second folio.

[8] *Ostentation* is *show, appearance*, or *display*. The Poet has *ostent* in the same sense. See vol ii. page 624, note 1.

[9] A rather singular use of *become*. Of course it has the sense of *come to be*, or, simply, *come*.

[10] *Remorse* was continually used for *pity*, or the *relentings* of compassion. See vol. ii page 504, note 6.

[11] Strain it up to the highest pitch. So, in the common phrase, *rack-rent*.

[12] The *liver* was formerly thought to be the seat of the passions. See vol. ii. page 56, note 8.

And wish he had not so accused her,—
No, though he thought his accusation true.
Let this be so, and doubt not but success
Will fashion the event in better shape
Than I can lay it down in likelihood.
But if all aim but this be levell'd false,[13]
The supposition of the lady's death
Will quench the wonder of her infamy:
And, if it sort not well, you may conceal her
(As best befits her wounded reputation)
In some reclusive and religious life,
Out of all eyes, tongues, minds, and injuries.

Bene. Signior Leonato, let the friar advise you:
And though you know my inwardness[14] and love
Is very much unto the Prince and Claudio,
Yet, by mine honour, I will deal in this
As secretly and justly as your soul
Should with your body.

Leon. Being that I flow in grief,
The smallest twine may lead me.[15]

Friar. 'Tis well consented: presently away;
For to strange sores they strangely strain the cure.—
Come, lady, die to live: this wedding-day
Perhaps is but prolong'd: have patience, and endure.

[*Exeunt Friar* FRANCIS, HERO, *and* LEON.

Bene. Lady Beatrice, have you wept all this while?

Beat. Yea, and I will weep awhile longer.

Bene. I will not desire that.

Beat. You have no reason; I do it freely.

Bene. Surely I do believe your fair cousin is wrong'd.

Beat. Ah, how much might the man deserve of me that would right her!

Bene. Is there any way to show such friendship?

Beat. A very even way, but no such friend.

Bene. May a man do it?

Beat. It is a man's office, but not yours.

Bene. I do love nothing in the world so well as you: is not that strange?

[13] I do not well understand this. What does the word *this* refer to? to what precedes? or to what follows? If the former, *but* should evidently be changed to *at*. — *Aim* is here again used in the sense of *guess*.

[14] *Inwardness* is here used for *intimacy*. *Inward* often occurs in a similar sense, both as a noun and an adjective. See vol. ii. page 319, note 3.

[15] This is one of Shakespeare's subtile observations upon life. Men, overpowered with distress, eagerly listen to the first offers of relief, close with every scheme, and believe every promise. He that has no longer any confidence in himself is glad to repose his trust in any other that will undertake to guide him.

Beat. As strange as the thing I know not. It were as possible for me to say I loved nothing so well as you: but believe me not; and yet I lie not; I confess nothing, nor I deny nothing. — I am sorry for my cousin.

Bene. By my sword, Beatrice, thou lovest me.

Beat. Do not swear by it, and eat it.

Bene. I will swear by it that you love me; and I will make him eat it that says I love not you.

Beat. Will you not eat your word?

Bene. With no sauce that can be devised to it. I protest I love thee.

Beat. Why, then, God forgive me!

Bene. What offence, sweet Beatrice?

Beat. You have stayed me in a happy hour: I was about to protest I loved you.

Bene. And do it with all thy heart.

Beat. I love you with so much of my heart, that none is left to protest.

Bene. Come, bid me do any thing for thee.

Beat. Kill Claudio.

Bene. Ha! not for the wide world.

Beat. You kill me to deny it. Farewell.

Bene. Tarry, sweet Beatrice.

Beat. I am gone, though I am here:[16] — there is no love in you: — nay, I pray you, let me go.

Bene. Beatrice, —

Beat. In faith, I will go.

Bene. We'll be friends first.

Beat. You dare easier be friends with me than fight with mine enemy.

Bene. Is Claudio thine enemy?

Beat. Is he not approved in the height a villain, that hath slandered, scorned, dishonoured my kinswoman? — O that I were a man! — What, bear her in hand[17] until they come to take hands; and then, with public accusation, uncovered slander, unmitigated rancour, — O God, that I were a man! I would eat his heart in the market-place.

Bene. Hear me, Beatrice, —

Beat. Talk with a man out at a window! — a proper saying!

Bene. Nay, but, Beatrice, —

Beat. Sweet Hero! — she is wrong'd, she is slandered, she is undone.

Bene. Beat —

[16] Though my person stay with you, my heart is gone from you.

[17] A common phrase of the time, signifying to *take*, *lead*, *carry* along, as an expectant or friend. See vol. i. page 551, note 5.

Beat. Princes and counties![18] Surely, a princely testimony, a goodly count, Count Confect;[19] a sweet gallant, surely! O that I were a man for his sake! or that I had any friend would be a man for my sake! But manhood is melted into courtesies, valour into compliment, and men are only turned into tongue, and trim ones too:[20] he is now as valiant as Hercules that only tells a lie, and swears it. — I cannot be a man with wishing, therefore I will die a woman with grieving.

Bene. Tarry, good Beatrice. By this hand, I love thee.

Beat. Use it for my love some other way than swearing by it.

Bene. Think you in your soul the Count Claudio hath wrong'd Hero?

Beat. Yea, as sure as I have a thought or a soul.

Bene. Enough, I am engag'd; I will challenge him. I will kiss your hand, and so leave you. By this hand, Claudio shall render me a dear account. As you hear of me, so think of me. Go, comfort your cousin: I must say, she is dead: and so, farewell. [*Exeunt.*

Scene II. *The Same. A Prison.*

Enter Dogberry, Verges, *and Sexton, in gowns; and Watchmen, with* Conrade *and* Borachio.

Dogb. Is our whole dissembly appear'd?

Verg. O, a stool and a cushion for the sexton.

Sexton. Which be the malefactors?

Dogb. Marry, that am I and my partner.

Verg. Nay, that's certain; we have the exhibition to examine.[1]

Sexton. But which are the offenders that are to be examined? let them come before master constable.

Dogb. Yea, marry, let them come before me. — What is your name, friend?

Bora. Borachio.

Dogb. Pray write down — Borachio. — Yours, sirrah?

Con. I am a gentleman, sir, and my name is Conrade.

[18] *Countie* was the ancient term for a *count* or *earl*.

[19] That is, an image of a man, cast in sugar; such a nobleman as *confectioners* sell, "a sweet gallant:" of course spoken in contempt.

[20] *Trim* seems here to signify *apt, fair-spoken*. *Tongue* used in the singular, and *trim ones* in the plural, is a mode of construction not uncommon in Shakespeare.

[1] This is a blunder of the constables, for "examination to exhibit." In the last scene of the third act, Leonato says, "Take their examination yourself and bring it me."

Dogb. Write down — master gentleman Conrade. — Masters, do you serve God?

Con. Bora. Yea, sir, we hope.

Dogb. Write down — that they hope they serve God: — and write God first; for God defend but God should go before such villains! — Masters, it is proved already that you are little better than false knaves; and it will go near to be thought so shortly. How answer you for yourselves?

Con. Marry, sir, we say we are none.

Dogb. A marvellous witty fellow, I assure you; but I will go about with him. — Come you hither, sirrah: a word in your ear, sir; I say to you, it is thought you are false knaves.

Bora. Sir, I say to you we are none.

Dogb. Well, stand aside. — 'Fore God, they are both in a tale! Have you writ down — that they are none?

Sexton. Master constable, you go not the way to examine: you must call forth the watch that are their accusers.

Dogb. Yea, marry, that's the eftest[2] way. — Let the watch come forth. — Masters, I charge you, in the Prince's name, accuse these men.

1 *Watch.* This man said, sir, that Don John, the Prince's brother, was a villain.

Dogb. Write down — Prince John a villain. — Why, this is flat perjury, to call a prince's brother villain.

Bora. Master constable, —

Dogb. Pray thee, fellow, peace: I do not like thy look, I promise thee.

Sexton. What heard you him say else?

2 *Watch.* Marry, that he had received a thousand ducats of Don John for accusing the Lady Hero wrongfully.

Dogb. Flat burglary as ever was committed.

Verg. Yea, by the Mass, that it is.

Sexton. What else, fellow?

1 *Watch.* And that Count Claudio did mean, upon his words, to disgrace Hero before the whole assembly, and not marry her.

Dogb. O villain! thou wilt be condemn'd into everlasting redemption for this.

Sexton. What else?

2 *Watch.* This is all.

Sexton. And this is more, masters, than you can deny. Prince John is this morning secretly stolen away; Hero was in this manner accus'd, in this very manner refus'd, and upon the grief of this suddenly died. — Master constable, let these

[2] The *quickest* or the *handiest* way.

men be bound, and brought to Leonato's: I will go before, and show him their examination. [*Exit.*

Dogb. Come, let them be opinion'd.

Verg. Let them be in the hands [3] —

Con. Off, coxcomb!

Dogb. God's my life! where's the sexton? let him write down — the Prince's officer, coxcomb. — Come, bind them. — Thou naughty varlet!

Con. Away! you are an ass, you are an ass.

Dogb. Dost thou not suspect my place? dost thou not suspect my years? — O that he were here to write me down an ass! — but, masters, remember, that I am an ass; though it be not written down, yet forget not that I am an ass. — No, thou villain, thou art full of piety, as shall be prov'd upon thee by good witness. I am a wise fellow; and, which is more, an officer; and, which is more, a householder; and, which is more, as pretty a piece of flesh as any in Messina; and one that knows the law, go to; and a rich fellow enough, go to; and a fellow that hath had losses; [4] and one that hath two gowns, and every thing handsome about him. — Bring him away. — O that I had been writ down an ass! [*Exeunt.*

ACT V. Scene I. *Messina. Before* Leonato's *House.*

Enter Leonato *and* Antonio.

Ant. If you go on thus, you will kill yourself;
And 'tis not wisdom thus to second grief
Against yourself.
Leon. I pray thee, cease thy counsel,
Which falls into mine ears as profitless
As water in a sieve: give not me counsel;
Nor let no comforter delight mine ear
But such a one whose wrongs do suit with mine.
Bring me a father that so lov'd his child,
Whose joy of her is overwhelm'd like mine,
And bid him speak to me of patience;
Measure his woe the length and breadth of mine,

[3] The reading of the old copies here is, — "Let them be in the hands of coxcomb;" thus running two speeches into one, as is evident from Dogberry's reply. The correction was made by Theobald, and has been generally received. Of course Verges was broken off in the midst of his speech; so that there is no telling how he would have ended.

[4] Collier's second folio changes *losses* to *leases*. Probably the author of the change could not conceive why Dogberry should thus boast of his *losses*. But the man's pride naturally fastens on the point of his being still rich in spite of his losses.

And let it answer every strain for strain;
As thus for thus, and such a grief for such,
In every lineament, branch, shape, and form:
If such a one will smile, and stroke his beard,
Bid sorrow wag, cry *hem* when he should groan,[1]
Patch grief with proverbs, make misfortune drunk
With candle-wasters,[2] — bring him yet to me,
And I of him will gather patience.
But there is no such man: for, brother, men
Can counsel, and speak comfort to that grief
Which they themselves not feel; but, tasting it,
Their counsel turns to passion, which before
Would give preceptial medicine to rage,
Fetter strong madness in a silken thread,
Charm ache with air, and agony with words.
No, no; 'tis all men's office to speak patience
To those that wring under the load of sorrow;
But no man's virtue nor sufficiency
To be so moral when he shall endure
The like himself. Therefore give me no counsel:
My griefs cry louder than advertisement.[3]

Ant. Therein do men from children nothing differ.

Leon. I pray thee, peace! I will be flesh and blood;
For there was never yet philosopher
That could endure the tooth-ache patiently,
However they have writ the style of gods,
And made a push[4] at chance and sufferance.

Ant. Yet bend not all the harm upon yourself;
Make those that do offend you suffer too.

Leon. There thou speak'st reason: nay, I will do so.
My soul doth tell me Hero is belied;
And that shall Claudio know; so shall the Prince,
And all of them that thus dishonour her.

[1] This passage has caused a deal of trouble to the commentators. The old copies read, "*And* sorrow, wagge, cry," &c., out of which it is hardly possible to make any sense. To set forth the various changes that have been proposed would be too long a story for this place. The reading here given is Capell's: Dyce pronounces it "incomparably the best yet proposed."

[2] *Candle-wasters* would here seem, from the context, to mean those who waste candles in wearing out the night with mirth and revelry. Sometimes, however, it appears to have been used in a very different sense, — of those who "burn the midnight oil" in study. Thus in Ben Jonson's *Cynthia's Revels:* "Heart, was there ever so prosperous an invention thus unluckily perverted and spoiled by a whoreson *book-worm*, a *candle-waster*?"

[3] *Advertisement*, even as now used, might easily pass over into the kindred sense of *admonition* or *instruction*.

[4] *Push* is an old exclamation, equivalent to *pish*. So in *Timon of Athens*, iii. 6: "*Push!* did you see my cap?" spoken by one of the Lords when o'd Timon hurls the dishes at them, and drives them out from the sham banquet to which he had invited them.

Ant. Here come the Prince and Claudio hastily.

Enter Don PEDRO *and* CLAUDIO.

D. Pedro. Good den, good den.
Claud. Good day to both of you.
Leon. Hear you, my lords, —
D. Pedro. We have some haste, Leonato.
Leon. Some haste, my lord! — well, fare you well, my lord: —
Are you so hasty now? — well, all is one.
D. Pedro. Nay, do not quarrel with us, good old man.
Ant. If he could right himself with quarrelling,
Some of us would lie low.
Claud. Who wrongs him?
Leon. Who![5]
Marry, thou wrong'st me; thou dissembler, thou: —
Nay, never lay thy hand upon thy sword;
I fear thee not.
Claud. Marry, beshrew my hand,
If it should give your age such cause of fear:
In faith, my hand meant nothing to my sword.
Leon. Tush, tush, man! never fleer and jest at me:
I speak not like a dotard nor a fool,
As, under privilege of age, to brag
What I have done, being young, or what would do,
Were I not old. Know, Claudio, to thy head,
Thou hast so wrong'd mine innocent child and me,
That I am forc'd to lay my reverence by,
And, with grey hairs and bruise of many days,
Do challenge thee to trial of a man.
I say thou hast belied mine innocent child;
Thy slander hath gone through and through her heart,
And she lies buried with her ancestors, —
O, in a tomb where never scandal slept,
Save this of hers, fram'd by thy villainy!
Claud. My villainy!
Leon. Thine, Claudio; thine I say.
D. Pedro. You say not right, old man.
Leon. My lord, my lord,
I'll prove it on his body, if he dare,
Despite his nice fence and his active practice,[6]
His May of youth and bloom of lustyhood.

[5] *Who!* is wanting in all the old copies. I adopt it, with some hesitation, from Walker, who shows many like instances of words omitted in old printing.

[6] *Practice* here means *exercise*, or *well-practised* skill, in the use of the sword.

Claud. Away! I will not have to do with you.
Leon. Canst thou so daff me? Thou hast kill'd my child:
If thou kill'st me, boy, thou shalt kill a man.
Ant. He shall kill two of us, and men indeed:
But that's no matter; let him kill one first; —
Win me and wear me, — let him answer me. —
Come, follow, boy; come, sir boy, follow me:
Sir boy, I'll whip you from your foining fence;[7]
Nay, as I am a gentleman, I will.
Leon. Brother, —
Ant. Content yourself. God knows I lov'd my niece;
And she is dead, slander'd to death by villains,
That dare as well answer a man indeed[8]
As I dare take a serpent by the tongue;
Boys, apes, braggárts, jacks, milksops! —
Leon. Brother Antony, —
Ant. Hold you content. What, man! I know them, yea,
And what they weigh, even to the utmost scruple, —
Scambling,[9] out-facing, fashion-mongering boys,
That lie, and cog,[10] and flout, deprave and slander,
Go antícly, show outward hideousness,
And speak off half a dozen dangerous words,
How they might hurt their enemies, if they durst;
And this is all.
Leon. But, brother Antony, —
Ant. Come, 'tis no matter:
Do not you meddle; let me deal in this.
D. Pedro. Gentlemen both, we will not wake[11] your patience.
My heart is sorry for your daughter's death;
But, on my honour, she was charg'd with nothing
But what was true, and very full of proof.
Leon. My lord, my lord, —
D. Pedro. I will not hear you.
Leon. No? —
Come, brother, away. — I will be heard.
Ant. And shall, or some of us will smart for 't.
[*Exeunt* LEONATO *and* ANTONIO.

[7] *Foining* is an old word for *thrusting*. — *Fence* is sword-practice, a teacher of which is still called a *fencing*-master.

[8] *Indeed* here goes with *man*, not with *answer*; a *real* man, or one who is indeed a man; as in Hamlet's "A combination and a form indeed."

[9] *Scambling* appears to have been much the same as *scrambling*, shifting, or shuffling. "Griffe graffe," says Cotgrave, "by hook or by crook, squimble squamble, *scamblingly*, catch that catch may."

[10] To *cog* is to *cheat* or *cajole*. See vol. ii. page 281, note 6. — To go *anticly* is to go fantastically or apishly, like a buffoon. See page 98, note 4.

[11] That is, rouse, stir up, convert your patience into anger. Dyce thinks *wake* "a most suspicious lection," and Hanmer changed it to *rack*.

D. Pedro. See, see; here comes the man we went to seek.

Enter BENEDICK.

Claud. Now, signior, what news?

Bene. Good day, my lord.

D. Pedro. Welcome, signior: you are almost come to part almost a fray.

Claud. We had like to have had our two noses snapp'd off with two old men without teeth.

D. Pedro. Leonato and his brother. What think'st thou? Had we fought, I doubt[12] we should have been too young for them.

Bene. In a false quarrel there is no true valour. I came to seek you both.

Claud. We have been up and down to seek thee; for we are high-proof melancholy, and would fain have it beaten away. Wilt thou use thy wit?

Bene. It is in my scabbard: shall I draw it?

D. Pedro. Dost thou wear thy wit by thy side?

Claud. Never any did so, though very many have been beside their wit. — I will bid thee draw, as we do the minstrels; draw, to pleasure us.[13]

D. Pedro. As I am an honest man, he looks pale. — Art thou sick, or angry?

Claud. What, courage, man! What though care kill'd a cat, thou hast mettle enough in thee to kill care.

Bene. Sir, I shall meet your wit in the career, an you charge it against me. I pray you choose another subject.

Claud. Nay, then give him another staff; this last was broke cross.[14]

D. Pedro. By this light, he changes more and more: I think he be angry indeed.

Claud. If he be, he knows how to turn his girdle.[15]

Bene. Shall I speak a word in your ear?

[12] *Doubt* was very often used in the sense of *fear* or *suspect*. So in 1 *Henry IV.*, i. 2: "But I *doubt* they will be too hard for us." See, also, vol ii. page 547, note 5.

[13] I will bid thee draw thy sword, as we bid the minstrels draw the bows of their fiddles, merely to please us.

[14] The allusion here is to tilting. It was held very disgraceful for a tilter to have his spear broken across the body of his adversary, instead of by a push of the point. See vol. i. page 69, note 4.

[15] Thus Sir Ralph Winwood in a letter to Cecil: "I said, what I spake was not to make him angry. He replied, If I were angry, I might turn the buckle of my girdle behind me." The phrase came from the practice of wrestlers, and is thus explained by Mr. Holt White: "Large belts were worn with the buckle before, but for wrestling the buckle was turned behind, to give the adversary a fairer grasp at the girdle. To turn the buckle behind was therefore a challenge."

Claud. God bless me from a challenge!

Bene. You are a villain; — I jest not: — I will make it good how you dare, with what you dare, and when you dare. Do me right, or I will protest your cowardice. You have kill'd a sweet lady, and her death shall fall heavy on you. Let me hear from you.

Claud. Well, I will meet you, so I may have good cheer.

D. Pedro. What, a feast? a feast?

Claud. I' faith, I thank him; he hath bid me to a calf's head and a capon; the which if I do not carve most curiously, say my knife's naught. — Shall I not find a woodcock too?[16]

Bene. Sir, your wit ambles well; it goes easily.

D. Pedro. I'll tell thee how Beatrice prais'd thy wit the other day. I said thou hadst a fine wit: *True*, says she, *a fine little one. No*, said I, *a great wit: Right*, says she, *a great gross one. Nay*, said I, *a good wit: Just*, said she, *it hurts nobody. Nay*, said I, *the gentleman is wise: Certain*, said she, *a wise gentleman.*[17] *Nay*, said I, *he hath the tongues: That I believe*, said she, *for he swore a thing to me on Monday night, which he forswore on Tuesday morning; there's a double tongue; there's two tongues.* Thus did she, an hour together, trans-shape thy particular virtues: yet at last she concluded with a sigh, thou wast the properest man in Italy.

Claud. For the which she wept heartily, and said she car'd not.

D. Pedro. Yea, that she did; but yet, for all that, an if she did not hate him deadly, she would love him dearly: — the old man's daughter told us all.

Claud. All, all; and, moreover, God saw him when he was hid in the garden.

D. Pedro. But when shall we set the savage bull's horns on the sensible Benedick's head?

Claud. Yea, and text underneath, *Here dwells Benedick, the married man?*

Bene. Fare you well, boy; you know my mind. I will leave you now to your gossip-like humour: you break jests as braggarts do their blades, which, God be thanked, hurt not. — My lord, for your many courtesies I thank you: I

[16] *A woodcock* was a common term for a foolish fellow; that savoury bird being supposed to have no brains. Claudio alludes to the stratagem whereby Benedick has been made to fall in love. Thus Sir William Cecil, in a letter to Secretary Maitland, referring to an attempted escape of some French hostages: "I went to lay some lime-twigs for certain *woodcocks*, which I have taken." The proverbial simplicity of the woodcock is often celebrated by Shakespeare. See vol. i. page 232, note 9.

[17] *Wise gentleman* was probably used ironically for a silly fellow; as we still say a *wise-acre*.

must discontinue your company. Your brother the bastard is fled from Messina: you have among you kill'd a sweet and innocent lady. For my Lord Lack-beard there, he and I shall meet; and till then peace be with him. [*Exit.*

D. Pedro. He is in earnest.

Claud. In most profound earnest; and, I'll warrant you, for the love of Beatrice.

D. Pedro. And hath challeng'd thee?

Claud. Most sincerely.

D. Pedro. What a pretty thing man is when he goes in his doublet and hose, and leaves off his wit!

Claud. He is then a giant to an ape: but then is an ape a doctor to such a man.

D. Pedro. But, soft you! let me be: pluck up, my heart, and be sad![18] Did he not say my brother was fled?

Enter DOGBERRY, VERGES, *and Watchmen, with* CONRADE *and* BORACHIO.

Dogb. Come you, sir: if justice cannot tame you, she shall ne'er weigh more reasons in her balance: nay, an you be a cursing hypocrite once, you must be look'd to.

D. Pedro. How now! two of my brother's men bound! Borachio one!

Claud. Hearken after their offence, my lord!

D. Pedro. Officers, what offence have these men done?

Dogb. Marry, sir, they have committed false report; moreover, they have spoken untruths; secondarily, they are slanderers; sixth and lastly, they have belied a lady; thirdly, they have verified unjust things; and, to conclude, they are lying knaves.

D. Pedro. First, I ask thee what they have done; thirdly, I ask thee what's their offence; sixth and lastly, why they are committed; and, to conclude, what you lay to their charge.

Claud. Rightly reasoned, and in his own division; and, by my troth, there's one meaning well suited.[19]

D. Pedro. Whom have you offended, masters, that you are thus bound to your answer? this learned constable is too cunning to be understood: what's your offence?

Bora. Sweet Prince, let me go no further to mine answer: do you hear me, and let this count kill me. I have deceived even your very eyes: what your wisdoms could not discover, these shallow fools have brought to light; who, in the night, overheard me confessing to this man, how Don John your

[18] Rouse thyself, my heart, and be prepared for serious consequences.

[19] That is, *one meaning put into many different dresses;* the Prince having asked the same question in four modes of speech.

brother incensed me to slander the lady Hero; how you were brought into the orchard, and saw me court Margaret in Hero's garments; how you disgrac'd her when you should marry her. My villainy they have upon record; which I had rather seal with my death than repeat over to my shame. The lady is dead upon mine and my master's false accusation; and, briefly, I desire nothing but the reward of a villain.

D. Pedro. Runs not this speech like iron through your blood?

Claud. I have drunk poison whiles he utter'd it.

D. Pedro. But did my brother set thee on to this?

Bora. Yea, and paid me richly for the practice of it.

D. Pedro. He is compos'd and fram'd of treachery:—
And fled he is upon this villainy.

Claud. Sweet Hero! now thy image doth appear
In the rare semblance that I lov'd it first.

Dogb. Come, bring away the plaintiffs: by this time our sexton hath reform'd Signior Leonato of the matter. And, masters, do not forget to specify, when time and place shall serve, that I am an ass.

Verg. Here, here comes master Signior Leonato, and the sexton too.

Re-enter LEONATO, ANTONIO, *and the Sexton.*

Leon. Which is the villain? Let me see his eyes,
That, when I note another man like him,
I may avoid him: which of these is he?

Bora. If you would know your wronger, look on me.

Leon. Art thou the slave that with thy breath hast kill'd
Mine innocent child?

Bora. Yea, even I alone.

Leon. No, not so, villain; thou beliest thyself:
Here stand a pair of honourable men,
A third is fled, that had a hand in it.—
I thank you, Princes, for my daughter's death:
Record it with your high and worthy deeds;
'Twas bravely done, if you bethink you of it.

Claud. I know not how to pray your patience,
Yet I must speak. Choose your revenge yourself;
Impose me to what penance your invention
Can lay upon my sin: yet sinn'd I not
But in mistaking.

D. Pedro. By my soul, nor I:
And yet, to satisfy this good old man,
I would bend under any heavy weight
That he'll enjoin me to.

Leon. I cannot bid you bid my daughter live,—
That were impossible: but, I pray you both,
Possess [20] the people in Messina here
How innocent she died; and, if your love
Can labour aught in sad invention,
Hang her an epitaph upon her tomb,[21]
And sing it to her bones,—sing it to-night:—
To-morrow morning come you to my house;
And, since you could not be my son-in-law,
Be yet my nephew: my brother hath a daughter,
Almost the copy of my child that's dead,
And she alone is heir to both of us: [22]
Give her the right you should have given her cousin,
And so dies my revenge.

Claud. O noble sir,
Your over-kindness doth wring tears from me!
I do embrace your offer; and dispose
For henceforth of poor Claudio.

Leon. To-morrow, then, I will expect your coming;
To-night I take my leave.—This naughty man
Shall face to face be brought to Margaret,
Who, I believe, was pack'd [23] in all this wrong,
Hir'd to it by your brother.

Bora. No, by my soul, she was not;
Nor knew not what she did when she spoke to me;
But always hath been just and virtuous
In any thing that I do know by her.

Dogb. Moreover, sir, (which indeed is not under white and black,) this plaintiff here, the offender, did call me ass: I beseech you let it be remember'd in his punishment. And also, the watch heard them talk of one Deformed: they say he wears a key in his ear, and a lock hanging by it; [24] and borrows money in God's name,—the which he hath us'd so long and never paid, that now men grow hard-hearted, and will lend nothing for God's sake. Pray you, examine him upon that point.

[20] To *possess* anciently signified to *inform*, to *make acquainted with*. So in *The Merchant of Venice*: "I have *possess'd* your grace of what I purpose."

[21] It was the custom to attach, upon or near the tombs of celebrated persons, a written inscription, either in prose or verse, generally in praise of the deceased.

[22] It would seem that Antonio's son, mentioned in Act i. sc. 2, must have died since the play began.

[23] To be *packed* is to be one of a *pack*, set, or gang; that is, an accomplice or confederate.

[24] It was one of the fantastic fashions of Shakespeare's time to wear a long hanging *lock of hair* dangling by the ear: it is often mentioned by contemporary writers, and may be observed in some ancient portraits. The humour of this passage is in Dogberry's supposing the *lock* to have a *key* to it.

Leon. I thank thee for thy care and honest pains.

Dogb. Your Worship speaks like a most thankful and reverend youth; and I praise God for you.

Leon. There's for thy pains.

Dogb. God save the foundation![25]

Leon. Go; I discharge thee of thy prisoner, and I thank thee.

Dogb. I leave an arrant knave with your Worship; which I beseech your Worship to correct yourself, for the example of others. God keep your Worship! I wish your Worship well; God restore you to health! I humbly give you leave to depart; and if a merry meeting may be wish'd, God prohibit it! — Come, neighbour.

[*Exeunt* DOGBERRY, VERGES, *and Watchmen.*

Leon. Until to-morrow morning, lords, farewell.

Ant. Farewell, my lords: we look for you to-morrow.

D. Pedro. We will not fail.

Claud. To-night I'll mourn with Hero.

[*Exeunt Don* PEDRO *and* CLAUDIO.

Leon. Bring you these fellows on. We'll talk with Margaret,
How her acquaintance grew with this lewd fellow.[26] [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *The Same.* LEONATO'S *Garden.*

Enter BENEDICK *and* MARGARET, *meeting.*

Bene. Pray thee, sweet Mistress Margaret, deserve well at my hands by helping me to the speech of Beatrice.

Marg. Will you, then, write me a sonnet in praise of my beauty?

Bene. In so high a style, Margaret, that no man living shall come over it; for, in most comely truth, thou deservest it.

Marg. To have no man come over me? why, shall I always keep below stairs?[1]

Bene. Thy wit is as quick as the greyhound's mouth; it catches.

Marg. And yours as blunt as the fencer's foils, which hit, but hurt not.

Bene. A most manly wit, Margaret; it will not hurt a

[25] A phrase used by those who received alms at the gates of religious and charitable houses. Dogberry probably designed to say, "God save the founder."

[26] Here *lewd* has not the common meaning; but rather means *knavish, ungracious, naughty*, which are the synonymes used with it in explaining the Latin *pravus* in dictionaries of the sixteenth century.

[1] Theobald reads *above* stairs; and the sense of the passage seems to require some such alteration: perhaps a word has been lost, and we may read, "Why, shall I always keep *them* below stairs?"

woman: and so, I pray thee, call Beatrice. I give thee the bucklers.[2]

Marg. Give us the swords; we have bucklers of our own. Well, I will call Beatrice to you, who I think hath legs.

Bene. And therefore will come. [*Exit* MARGARET.

[Sings.] *The god of love, that sits above,*
And knows me, and knows me,
How pitiful I deserve, —

I mean, in singing; but in loving, — Leander the good swimmer, Troilus the first employer of panders, and a whole book-full of these quondam carpet-mongers, whose names yet run smoothly in the even road of a blank verse, — why, they were never so truly turned over and over as my poor self in love. Marry, I cannot show it in rhyme; I have tried: I can find out no rhyme to *lady* but *baby*, an innocent rhyme; for *scorn*, *horn*, a hard rhyme; for *school*, *fool*, a babbling rhyme; very ominous endings: no, I was not born under a rhyming planet, nor I cannot woo in festival terms.[3] —

Enter BEATRICE.

Sweet Beatrice, wouldst thou come when I call'd thee?

Beat. Yea, signior, and depart when you bid me.

Bene. O, stay but till then!

Beat. *Then* is spoken; fare you well now: — and yet, ere I go, let me go with that I came for; which is, with knowing what hath pass'd between you and Claudio.

Bene. Only foul words; and thereupon I will kiss thee.

Beat. Foul words is but foul wind, and foul wind is but foul breath, and foul breath is noisome; therefore I will depart unkiss'd.

Bene. Thou hast frighted the word out of his right sense, so forcible is thy wit. But I must tell thee plainly, Claudio undergoes[4] my challenge; and either I must shortly hear from him or I will subscribe him a coward. And, I pray thee now, tell me for which of my bad parts didst thou first fall in love with me?

Beat. For them all together; which maintain'd so politic a state of evil, that they will not admit any good part to intermingle with them. But for which of my good parts did you first suffer love for me?

[2] To give the bucklers, was to yield the victory; whereby the victor got his adversary's shield, and kept his own.

[3] That is, *in choice phraseology*. So mine Host in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* says of Fenton, "He *speaks holiday*." And Hotspur, in 1 *Henry IV.*: "With many *holiday* and lady terms."

[4] Is under challenge, or now stands challenged, by me.

Bene. *Suffer love,* — a good epithet. I do suffer love indeed, for I love thee against my will.

Beat. In spite of your heart, I think: alas, poor heart! If you spite it for my sake, I will spite it for yours; for I will never love that which my friend hates.

Bene. Thou and I are too wise to woo peaceably.

Beat. It appears not in this confession: there's not one wise man among twenty that will praise himself.

Bene. An old, an old instance, Beatrice, that liv'd in the time of good neighbours.[5] If a man do not erect in this age his own tomb ere he dies, he shall live no longer in monument than the bell rings and the widow weeps.

Beat. And how long is that, think you?

Bene. Question:[6] — why, an hour in clamour, and a quarter in rheum: Therefore is it most expedient for the wise (if Don Worm, his conscience, find no impediment to the contrary) to be the trumpet of his own virtues, as I am to myself. So much for praising myself, who, I myself will bear witness, is praiseworthy. And now tell me, how doth your cousin?

Beat. Very ill.

Bene. And how do you?

Beat. Very ill too.

Bene. Serve God, love me, and mend. There will I leave you too, for here comes one in haste.

Enter URSULA.

Urs. Madam, you must come to your uncle. Yonder's old coil[7] at home: it is proved my Lady Hero hath been falsely accus'd, the Prince and Claudio mightily abus'd; and Don John is the author of all, who is fled and gone. Will you come presently?

Beat. Will you go hear this news, signior?

Bene. I will live in thy heart, die in thy lap, and be buried in thy eyes;[8] and, moreover, I will go with thee to thy uncle. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. *The Same. The Inside of a Church.*

Enter Don PEDRO, CLAUDIO, *and Attendants, with music and tapers.*

Claud. Is this the monument of Leonato?

Atten. It is, my lord.

[5] When men were not envious, but every one gave another his due.

[6] This phrase seems equivalent to, "You ask a question indeed!" or, "That is the question!"

[7] That is, huge bustle, or stir. *Old* was much used as an augmentative in familiar language. perhaps because things that are *old* have given proof of strength. in having outstood the trial of time See vol. i. page 163, note 2.

[8] Mr. Collier says, "The Rev. Mr. Barry suggests to me that the words *heart* and *eyes* have in some way changed places in the old copies."

Claud. [Reads from a scroll.]

Done to death[1] *by slanderous tongues*
Was the Hero that here lies:
Death, in guerdon of her wrongs,
Gives her fame which never dies.
So the life that died with shame
Lives in death with glorious fame.—
[Fixing up the scroll.
Hang thou there upon the tomb,
Praising her when I am dumb.—

Now, music, sound, and sing your solemn hymn.

SONG.

Pardon, goddess of the night,
Those that slew thy virgin knight;[2]
For the which, with songs of woe,
Round about her tomb they go.
Midnight, assist our moan;
Help us to sigh and groan,
Heavily, heavily:
Graves, yawn, and yield your dead
Till death be uttered,
Heavily, heavily.[3]

Claud. Now, unto thy bones good night!—
Yearly will I do this rite.

1 This phrase occurs frequently in writers of Shakespeare's time: it appears to be derived from the French phrase, *faire mourir*.

2 *Knight* was a common poetical appellation of virgins in Shakespeare's time; probably in allusion to their being the votarists of Diana, whose chosen pastime was in knightly sports. Thus in Fletcher's *Two Noble Kinsmen*, v. 1:

"O, sacred, shadowy, cold, and constant queen,
Abandoner of revels, mute, contemplative,
Sweet, solitary, white as chaste, and pure
As wind-fann'd snow, who to thy *female knights*
Allow'st no more blood than will make a blush,
Which is their order's robe."

3 Such is the quarto reading; the folio has *heavenly* instead of *heavily*; and thereby hangs a long tale of critical commentary. Knight, Verplanck, Staunton, and White follow the folio; but the explanations which they give turn the passage into something very like a hieroglyph. Dyce and sundry others follow the quarto. Probably the most decisive comment on the question is Walker's; who sets down the folio reading as "a most absurd error, generated (*ut sæpe*) by the corruption of an uncommon word to a common one." And he adds the following: "So in *Hamlet*, ii. 2, —'it goes so *heavily* with my disposition,'—the folio has *heavenly*. With regard to the words, 'graves, yawn,' &c., I know not why we should consider them as any thing more than an invocation,—after the usual manner of funeral dirges in that age, in which mourners of some description or other are summoned to the funeral,—a call, I say, upon the surrounding dead to come forth from their graves, as auditors or sharers in the solemn lamentation. *Uttered*, expressed, commemorated in song."

D. Pedro. Good morrow, masters; put your torches out:
The wolves have prey'd; and look, the gentle day,
Before the wheels of Phœbus, round about
Dapples the drowsy East with spots of grey.
Thanks to you all, and leave us: fare you well.
Claud. Good morrow, masters: each his several way.
D. Pedro. Come, let us hence, and put on other weeds
And then to Leonato's we will go.
Claud. And Hymen now with luckier issue speed's
Than this for whom we render'd up this woe! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV. *The Same. A Room in* LEONATO'S *House.*

Enter LEONATO, ANTONIO, BENEDICK, BEATRICE, MARGARET, URSULA, *Friar* FRANCIS, *and* HERO.

Friar. Did I not tell you she was innocent?
Leon. So are the Prince and Claudio, who accus'd her
Upon the error that you heard debated:
But Margaret was in some fault for this,
Although against her will, as it appears
In the true course of all the question.
Ant. Well, I am glad that all things sort so well.
Bene. And so am I, being else by faith enforc'd
To call young Claudio to a reckoning for it.
Leon. Well, daughter, and you gentlewomen all,
Withdraw into a chamber by yourselves,
And, when I send for you, come hither mask'd:
The Prince and Claudio promis'd by this hour
To visit me. — You know your office, brother:
You must be father to your brother's daughter,
And give her to young Claudio. [*Exeunt Ladies.*
Ant. Which I will do with confirm'd countenance.
Bene. Friar, I must entreat your pains, I think.
Friar. To do what, signior?
Bene. To bind me, or undo me; one of them. —
Signior Leonato, truth it is, good signior,
Your niece regards me with an eye of favour.
Leon. That eye my daughter lent her: 'tis most true.
Bene. And I do with an eye of love requite her.
Leon. The sight whereof, I think, you had from me,
From Claudio, and the Prince: but what's your will?
Bene. Your answer, sir, is enigmatical:
But, for my will, my will is, your good will
May stand with ours, this day to be conjoin'd
I' the state of honourable marriage: —
In which, good friar, I shall desire your help.

Leon. My heart is with your liking.
Friar. And my help.
Here come the Prince and Claudio.

Enter Don PEDRO *and* CLAUDIO, *with Attendants.*

D. Pedro. Good morrow to this fair assembly.
Leon. Good morrow, Prince; — good morrow, Claudio:
We here attend you. Are you yet determin'd
To-day to marry with my brother's daughter?
Claud. I'll hold my mind, were she an Ethiop.
Leon. Call her forth, brother; here's the friar ready.
[*Exit* ANTONIO.
D. Pedro. Good morrow, Benedick. Why, what's the matter,
That you have such a February face,
So full of frost, of storm, and cloudiness?
Claud. I think he thinks upon the savage bull. —
Tush! fear not, man, we'll tip thy horns with gold,
And all Europa shall rejoice at thee. —

Re-enter ANTONIO, *with the Ladies masked.*

Which is the lady I must seize upon?[1]
Ant. This same is she, and I do give you her.
Claud. Why, then she's mine. — Sweet, let me see your face.
Leon. No, that you shall not, till you take her hand
Before this friar, and swear to marry her.
Claud. Give me your hand before this holy friar:
I am your husband, if you like of me.
Hero. And when I liv'd, I was your other wife:
[*Unmasking.*
And when you lov'd, you were my other husband.
Claud. Another Hero!
Hero. Nothing certainer:
One Hero died defil'd; but I do live,
And, surely as I live, I am a maid.
D. Pedro. The former Hero! Hero that is dead!
Leon. She died, my lord, but whiles her slander liv'd.
Friar. All this amazement can I qualify;
When, after that the holy rites are ended,
I'll tell you largely of fair Hero's death:
Meantime let wonder seem familiar,
And to the chapel let us presently.
Bene. Soft and fair, friar. — Which is Beatrice?

[1] *Seize upon* is a technical term in the law, for *take possession of.*

Beat. [*Unmasking.*] I answer to that name. What is your will?

Bene. Do not you love me?

Beat. Why, no; no more than reason.

Bene. Why, then your uncle, and the Prince, and Claudio Have been deceived: for they swore you did.

Beat. Do not you love me?

Bene. Troth, no; no more than reason.

Beat. Why, then my cousin, Margaret, and Ursula Are much deceiv'd; for they did swear you did.

Bene. They swore that you were almost sick for me.

Beat. They swore that you were well-nigh dead for me.

Bene. 'Tis no such matter. — Then you do not love me?

Beat. No, truly, but in friendly recompense.

Leon. Come, cousin, I'm sure you love the gentleman.

Claud. And I'll be sworn upon't that he loves her;
For here's a paper, written in his hand,
A halting sonnet of his own pure brain,
Fashion'd to Beatrice.

Hero. And here's another,
Writ in my cousin's hand, stol'n from her pocket,
Containing her affection unto Benedick.

Bene. A miracle! here's our own hands against our hearts. — Come, I will have thee; but, by this light, I take thee for pity.

Beat. I would not deny you; but, by this good day, I yield upon great persuasion; and partly to save your life, for I was told you were in a consumption.

Bene. Peace! I will stop your mouth. [*Kissing her.*

D. Pedro. How dost thou, Benedick the married man?

Bene. I'll tell thee what, Prince, a college of wit-crackers cannot flout me out of my humour. Dost thou think I care for a satire or an epigram? No: if a man will be beaten with brains, he shall wear nothing handsome about him. In brief, since I do purpose to marry, I will think nothing to any purpose that the world can say against it; and therefore never flout at me for what I have said against it; for man is a giddy thing, and this is my conclusion. — For thy part, Claudio, I did think to have beaten thee; but, in that thou art like to be my kinsman, live unbruis'd, and love my cousin.

Claud. I had well hop'd thou wouldst have denied Beatrice, that I might have cudgell'd thee out of thy single life, to make thee a double-dealer; which, out of question, thou wilt be, if my cousin do not look exceeding narrowly to thee.

Bene. Come, come, we are friends. — Let's have a dance ere we are married, that we may lighten our own hearts and our wives' heels.

Leon. We'll have dancing afterwards.

Bene. First, of my word; therefore play, music. — Prince, thou art sad; get thee a wife, get thee a wife.

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. My lord, your brother John is ta'en in flight,
And brought with armed men back to Messina.

Bene. Think not on him till to-morrow: I'll devise thee brave punishments for him. — Strike up, pipers!

[*Dance. Exeunt.*